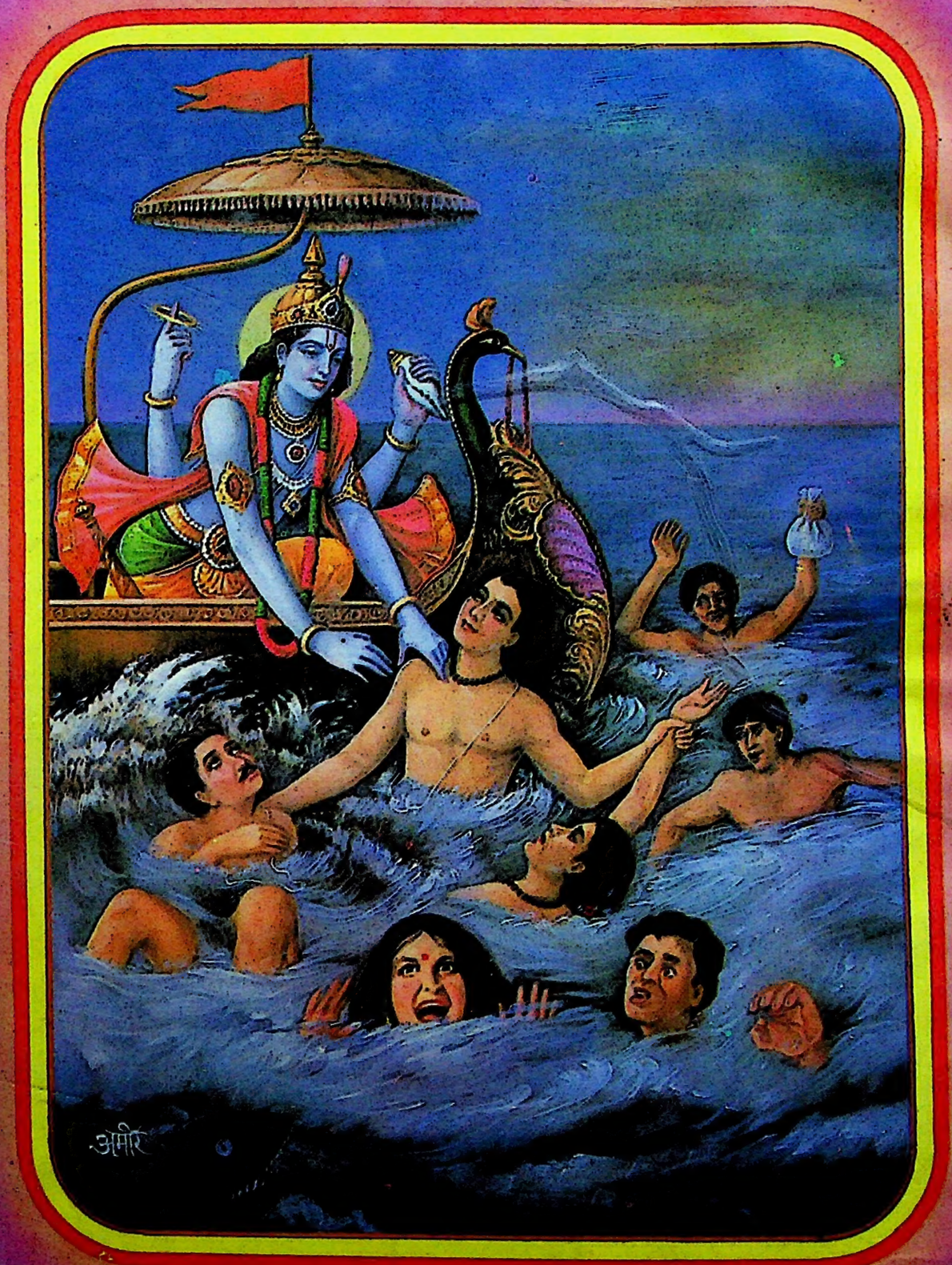
Om Śrī Paramātmane Namaḥ

458

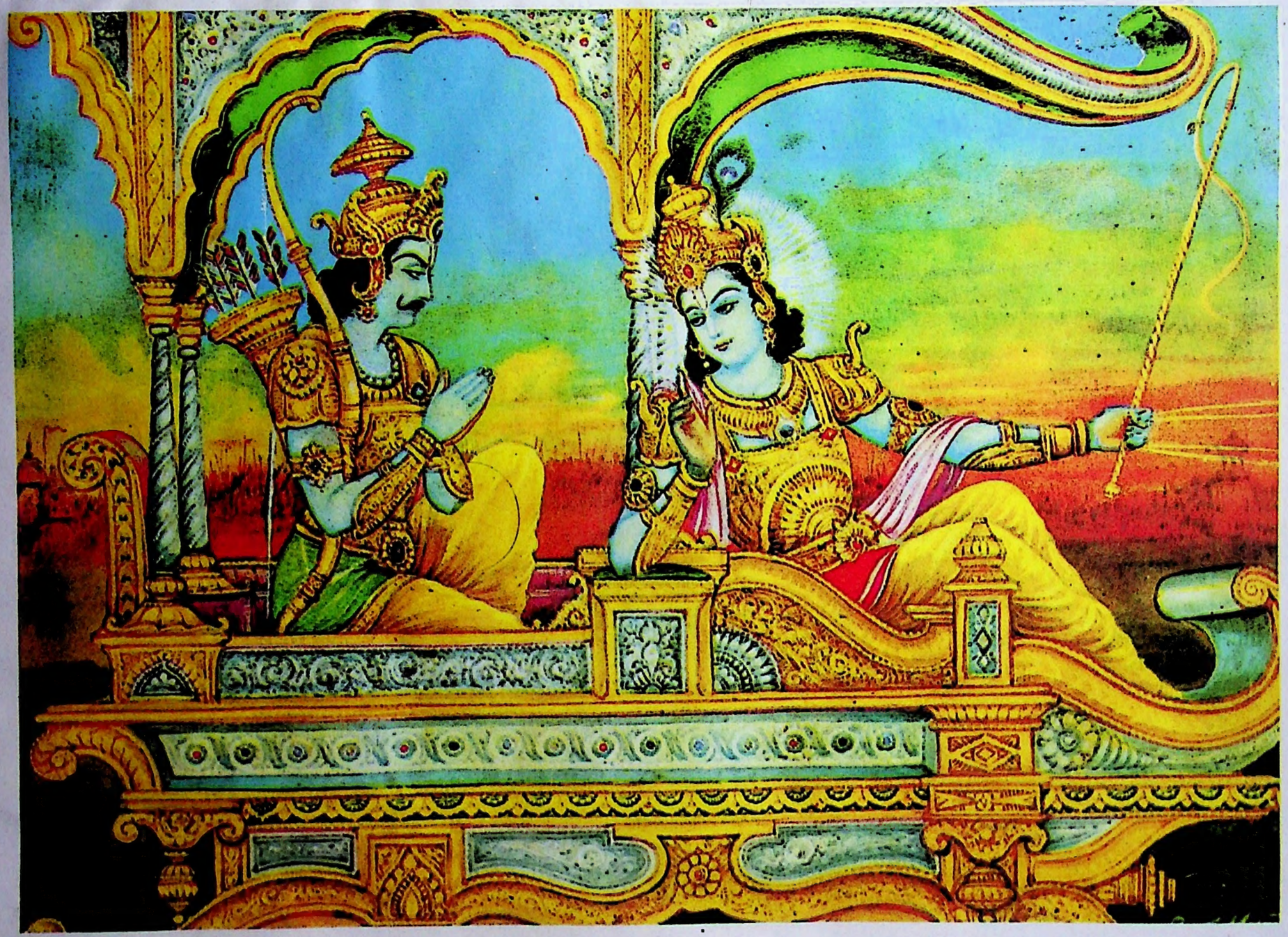
ŚRĪMAD BHAGAVADGĪTĀ

SĀDHAKA SAÑJĪVANĪ

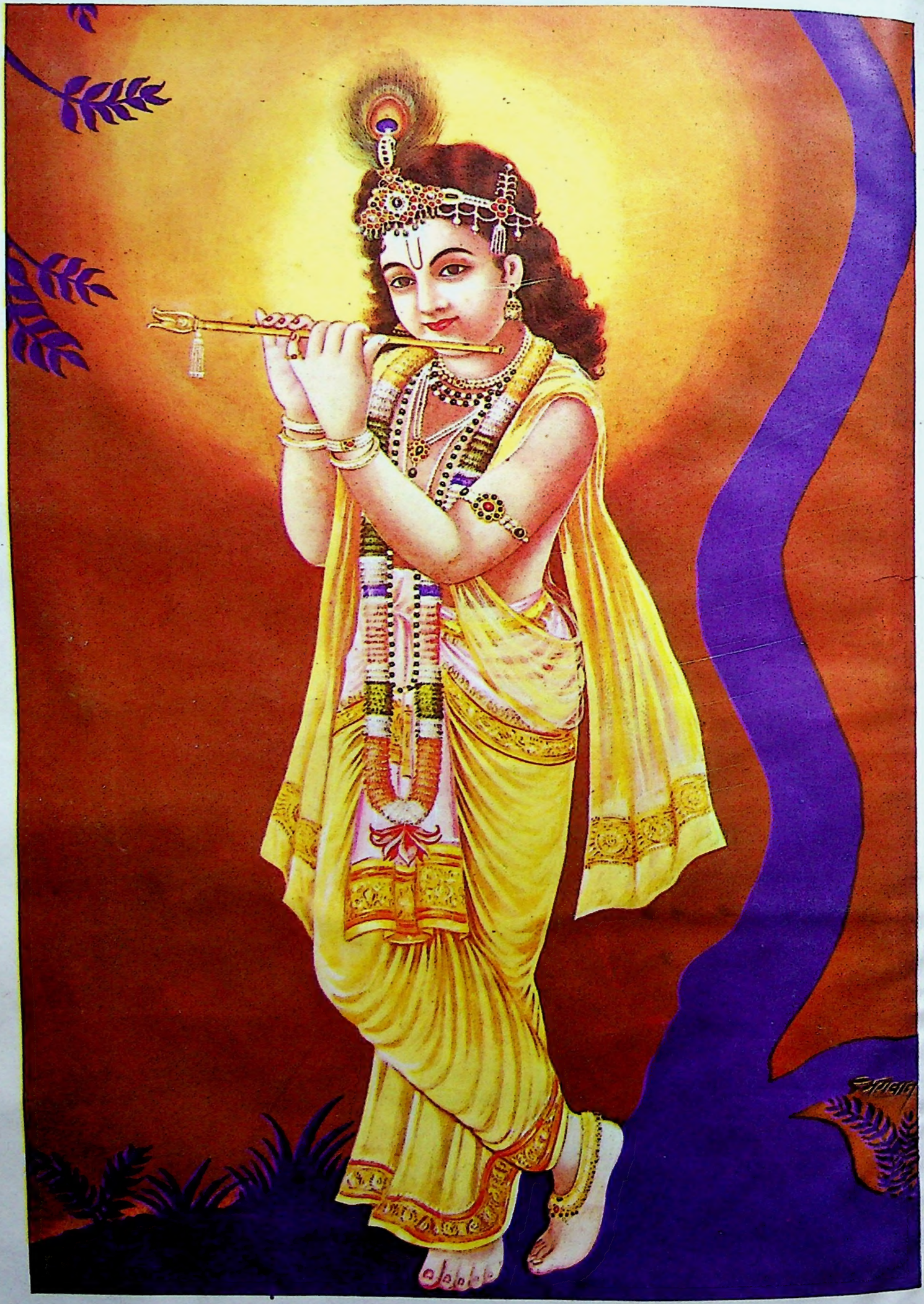


Swami Ramsukhdas

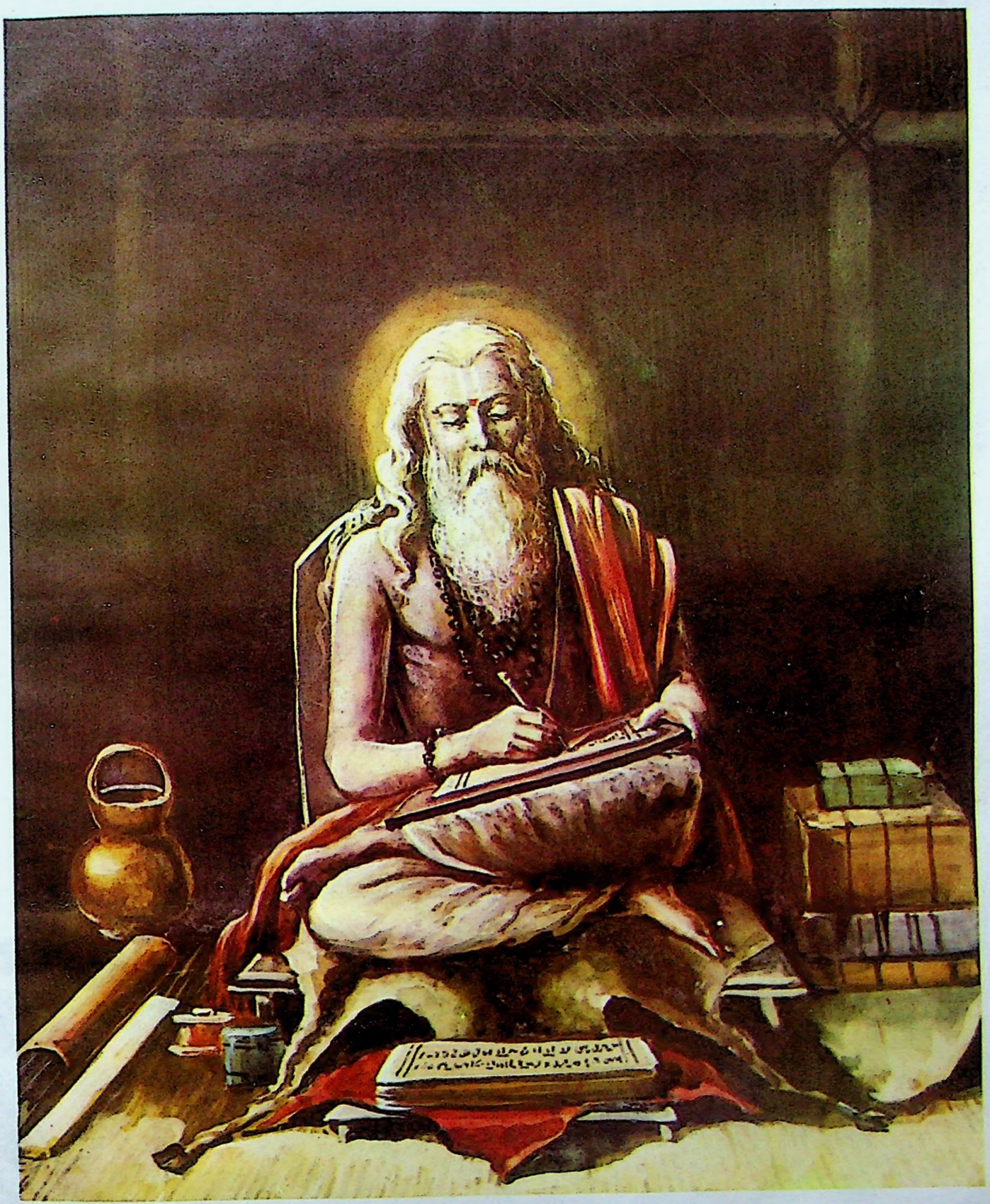
Revered Swāmījī has written this commentary not for profounding any philosophical view-point or for the show of his erudition, but he has made this fine endeavour for the spiritual benefit of the practising Sādhakas. This commentary works as a Sañjīvanī-Būṭī — the life-giving medicinal herb for every Sādhaka in any point of the world, adhering to any religious belief and speaking any language. With a study of this unique commentary, adherents of the various religious faiths, namely The Hindus, The Buddhists, The Jainas, The Pārasīs, The Christians, The Mohammedans and others, will equally find means for their rescue from the worldly ocean of suffering according to their own religious belief. The practising Sādhakas would also get sufficient material for fulfilling the aim of their life, i. e., realization of the Supreme Lord or the Universal Consciousness.



Prescript to Arjuna



Lord Kṛṣṇa



Sage Vedavyāsa

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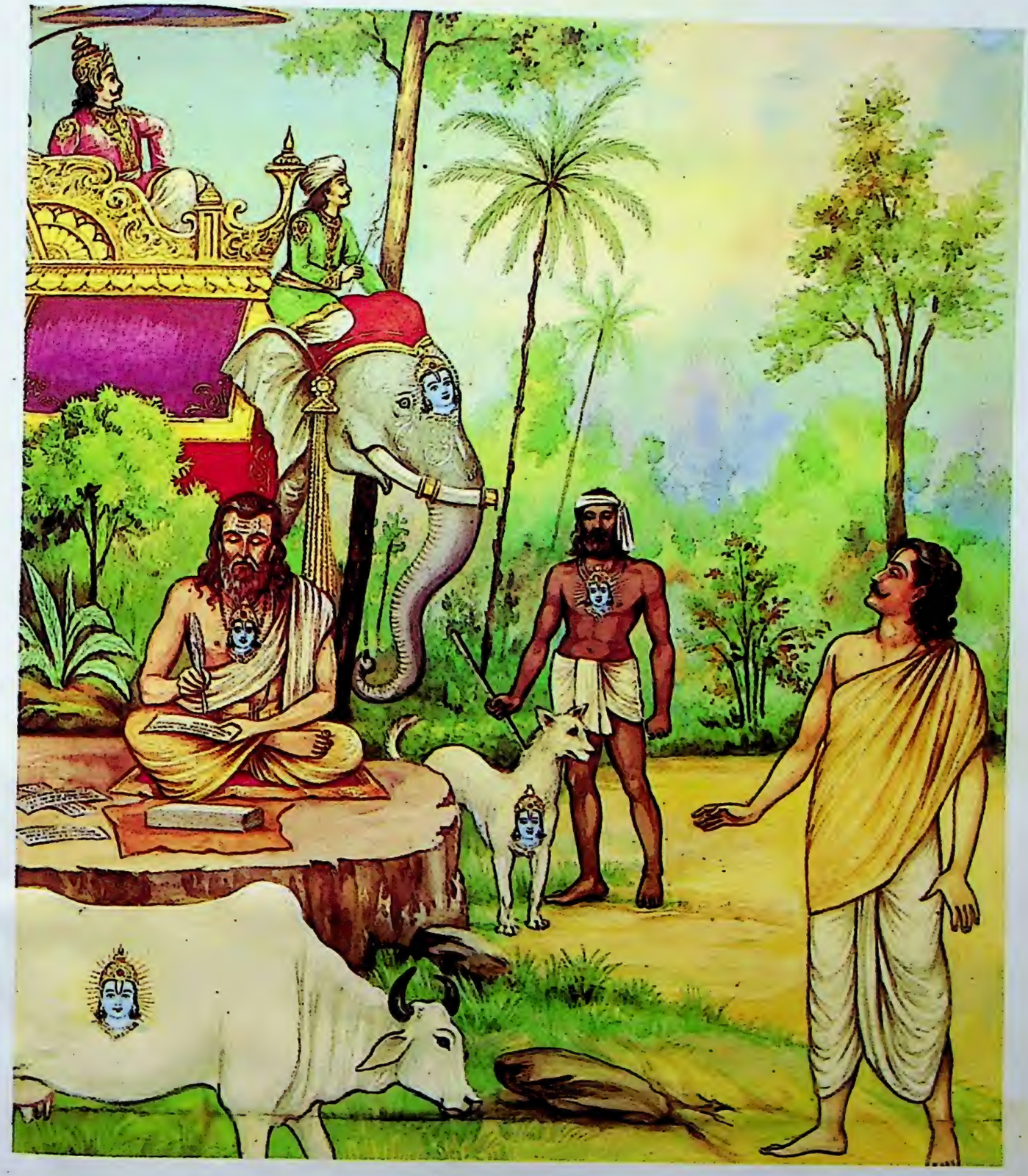

Impartiality

Redemption of Ajāmila

The Tree of the Universe

Lord Viṣṇu

0458

Oṁ Śrī Paramātmane Namaḥ

ŚRĪMAD BHAGAVADGĪTĀ

[With Sanskrit Text, Transliteration and English Translation]

(Translated into English by S. C. Vaishya)

Sādhaka Sañjīvanī

by

Swami Ramsukhdas

Published by Govind Bhawan Karyalaya
Gita Press, Gorakhpur

First Fifth Editions	1989—1996	24,000 Copies
Sixth Edition	1997	5,000 Copies
	Total	29,000 Copies

Price : Rs. 45.00

Printed at Gita Press, Gorakhpur—273005
Telephone: 334721

॥ Śrī Hariḥ ॥

Introduction

Śrīmadbhagavadgītā has got a unique place in the world literature. This is the most mystic and divine speech directly manifested from the Lord Himself. It contains the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa for the benefit of Humanity at large in the form of the interlocution with Arjuna representing the individual human being (Jīva). In this small book tract, the Lord has projected unique ideas which are inaccessible and which no one has been able to surpass so far nor will ever be able to surpass.

Our most Revered Swāmī Śrī Rāmasukhadāsajī Mahārāja has searched out many secret and valuable jewels of spiritual ideas from this unfathomable sea of Bhagavadgītā and has very kindly and graciously given for the welfare of our readers, the Sādhakas and the public at large. These ideas have been beautifully expressed through the medium of Sādhaka Sañjīvanī Ṭīkā of the Gītā. In comparison to the other commentaries of the Gītā, this commentary appears to us very extraordinary in character. Though our knowledge of Gītā is very meagre, however, interpretation of these Ślokas and the spiritual ideas contained therein, impressed us as new and unique e.g., Chapter one—Verses: ten, nineteen, twenty and twenty-five; Chapter two—Verses: thirty-nine and forty; Chapter three—Verses: three, ten, twelve, thirteen and forty-three; Chapter four—Verses: eighteen and thirty-eight; Chapter five—Verses: thirteen and fourteen; Chapter six—Verses: twenty and thirty-eight; Chapter seven—Verses: five and nineteen; Chapter eight—Verse: six; Chapter nine—Verses: three and thirty-one; Chapter ten—Verse: forty-one; Chapter eleven—Verses: twenty-six, twenty-seven, forty-five and forty-six; Chapter twelve—Verse: twelve; Chapter thirteen—Verses: one, nineteen, twenty and twenty-one; Chapter fourteen—Verses: three, twelve, seventeen and twenty-two; Chapter fifteen—Verses: seven and eleven; Chapter sixteen—Verses: five and twenty; Chapter seventeen—Verses: seven, eight, nine and ten; Chapter eighteen–Verses: thirty-seven and seventy-three etc. We believe with a constant and serious study of this beautiful spiritual commentary meant mainly for the Sādhakas, the readers could search new interpretation in many more verses of the Gītā, which would undoubtedly help them in their spiritual upliftment.

In modern times, there is a great dearth of books containing simple and lucid interpretations of theme of spiritual discipline (Sādhana) and consequently difficulty is faced by the Sādhakas for their spiritual guidance. Under these circumstances publication of the present commentary written in a very simple and lucid style and containing directions to various simple means of God-Realization and many other things concerning the inner issues related there to, has its own importance.

Revered Swāmījī has written this commentary not for propounding any philosophical view-point or for the show of his erudition, but he has made this fine endeavour for the spiritual benefit of the practising Sādhakas. This commentary works as a Sañjīvanī-būṭī—the life-giving medicinal herb for every Sādhaka in any point of the world, adhering to any religious belief and speaking any language. With a study of this unique commentary, adherents of the various religious faiths, namely The Hindus, The Buddhists, The Jainas, The Pārasīs, The Christians, The Mohammedans

and others, will equally find means for their rescue from the worldly ocean of suffering according to their own religious belief. The practising Sādhakas would also get sufficient material for fulfilling the aim of their life, i.e., realization of the Supreme Lord or the Universal Consciousness.

Brothers and sisters desirous of realizing eternal Peace should study this great work with utmost sincerity, understand it and should try to practise the lofty spiritual ideals of Gītā contained herein with a novel spiritual interpretation.

This commentary was first published in 1984 in Hindi, and has since been reprinted eight times. Now, for the benefit of English-speaking readers and Sādhakas, English version of this commentary is being published. It is hoped, this English version will be equally popular and shall help people in rescuing themselves from the worldly ocean of suffering and rebirth and attaining beatitude and Supreme Peace.

Publisher

Thanks

Gorakhpur
Śrī Gītā Jayantī (1989)

॥ Śrī Paramātmane Namaḥ ॥

FOREWORD

वंशीधरं तोत्रधरं नमामि मनोहरं मोहहरं च कृष्णम् ।
मालाधरं धर्मधुरन्धरं च पार्थस्य सारथ्यकरं च देवम् ॥
कर्त्तव्यदीक्षां च समत्वशिक्षां ज्ञानस्यभिक्षां शरणागतिं च ।
ददाति गीता करुणार्द्रभूता कृष्णेनगीता जगतो हिताय ॥
संजीवनी साधकजीवनीयं प्राप्तिं हरेर्वै सरलं ब्रवीति ।
करोति दूरं पथिविघ्नबाधा ददाति शीघ्रं परमात्मसिद्धिम् ॥*

vaṁśīdharaṁ tottradharaṁ namāmi
manoharaṁ mohaharaṁ ca kṛṣṇam
mālādharaṁ dharmadhurandharaṁ ca
pārthasya sārathyakaraṁ ca devam
karttavyadīkṣāṁ ca samatvaśikṣāṁ
jñānasyabhikṣāṁ śaraṇāgatiṁ ca
dadāti gītā karuṇārdrabhūtā
kṛṣṇenagītā jagato hitāya
sañjīvanī sādhakajīvanīyaṁ
prāptiṁ harervai saralaṁ bravīti
karoti dūraṁ pathivighnabādhā
dadāti śīghraṁ paramātmasiddhim

ॐ

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* I bow down to Krsna, the Divine, the Flute-holder, the holder of the reins, the usurper of hearts and infatuation, the wearer of garland, the holder of the Axis of Dharma and the Charioteer of Arjuna.
Sung by Lord Krsna, the Gītā — drenched in ambrosial compassion — is the provider of initiation into duty, lesson of equanimity, alms of enlightenment and surrender and is for the welfare of mankind.
Bestower of the gift of life, this Sādhaka Sañjīvanī tells in simple terms the art of realizing Hari. It also removes the obstacles on the path and at once gives the supreme accomplishment of God-Realization.

॥ Śrī Hariḥ ॥

GLORY OF GĪTĀ

Unfathomable and illimitable is the glory of Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā. This holy book of Bhagavad Gītā is counted among the Scriptural Trio, the 'Prasthāna Traya'. The three Royal Ways of welfare of mankind are known by the name of Prasthāna Traya: one is the 'Vedic Prasthāna' called the Upaniṣad; one is metaphysical or 'Philosophical Prasthāna' called the Brahma Sūtra; and one is 'Smārta Prasthāna' called the Bhagavad Gītā. There are 'Mantras' (mystical rubrics) in the Upaniṣads, 'Sūtras' (aphorisms) in the Brahma Sūtra and 'Ślokas' (verses) in the Bhagavad Gītā. Though the Bhagavad Gītā has only 'Ślokas' yet they being the very voice of God are verily the mantras. Pregnant as the Ślokas are with meaning and import of great profundity, they can be called 'Sūtras' also. The Upaniṣads are of use and value for the eligibles only and the Brahma Sūtras are of use and importance only for men of erudition and learning, but the Bhagavad Gītā is of use for one and all.

The Bhagavad Gītā is an extremely extra-mundane wondrous document. Herein is available perfect and complete material useful for a seeker, be he of any country, any costume, any community, any creed, any 'Varṇa' (social-order), or any 'Āśrama' (stage of life) in life. It is so because there is in it neither denunciation nor praise of any creed or denomination in particular; instead it contains depiction of pure Reality only. Pure Reality (the Supreme Lord or Paramātmā) is that who is wholly beyond the changeable Nature and the Nature-born things and is ever eternally uni-essenced and uniform in midst of the flux of space, time, thing, being, circumstance etc. Real 'Tattva' is ever present in its perfect form in each man wherever and however he is. But that is not realized because of the presence of the attachment and aversion—Rāga and Dvaiṣa—born of the changeable nature of things in the person. Only on achieving complete freedom from attachment and aversion that is realized automatically and with effortless ease.

The gospel of Bhagavad Gītā is great and divine. Numerous commentaries have been written on it and several more are being continuously so written, yet ever new and fresh emotions and ideas still continue to surge up in the hearts and minds of saints, seers and sages of wisdom. However much may be thought about this profound Song divine, the meaning and deeper implications thereof none can fathom in their entirety. As and how deeper dive is made into it, profounder meanings continue to be found therein. When the end of the finer emotions of a good learned person is also not soon obtained, how can then the limit or end of the emotions and thoughts encased and treasured in the Words of God Whose forms and names are infinite be ever reached ?

There is such a uniqueness in this small-sized work that a real seeker of one's salvation (Kalyāṇa) whether he belongs to any Varṇa, Āśrama, nation, creed, belief etc., he is at once attracted by mere study of this treatise. If a man reads and grasps even a little from this Sacred Book, several satisfying disciplines or ways become available to him for his life's fulfilment. Differently qualified persons are there for the study of respective systems of philosophy, but the unique significance of the Gītā is that all the seekers of salvation are eligible to its study.

In giving description of disciplines (Sādhana), in communicating their understanding extensively, no hesitation has been made in repeatedly telling about each and every discipline in the

Bhagavad Gītā and yet its size has not increased. No other single holy Book of Wisdom is there which expounds full import of the Reality atonce with such a precision and prolification. A man with intense yearning for his 'Kalyāṇa' can realize Godhead, the Supreme Truth, in each and every circumstance; can achieve salvation even in a critical circumstance like war — thus the art of supreme fulfilment in each walk of worldly life is taught in the Gītā. No other book of its kind or peer thus comes to our view.

Gītā is a Book of Grace. Extremely strange, divine and peace-providing feelings spring up by its mere recitation after taking its refuge. Profound peace is obtained by its sheer hearty recitation. Its one method is to first cram with meaning all the 'Ślokas' of the Gītā, and if then the reverse recitation of the Gītā, sitting in solitude without the aid of the book, beginning from the last 'Śloka' "Yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇaḥ....." to the first one "Dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre....." is done, then profound peace experienced. If Gītā is recited in its completeness everyday once or many times, ever new special and distinctive meanings well up in the reader's heart. Even if there is any query or doubt in the mind, it gets resolved automatically during the course of recitation.

In reality, no one is competent or capable enough to sing the glory of this scripture. Who can dare describe the great glory of the infinitely glorious holy Gītā ?

SPECIFIC GOAL OF GĪTĀ

The Gītā has not originated with any specific 'ism' in view: neither with Dvaita, Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, Dvaitādvaita, Viśuddhādvaita, Acintyabhedābheda nor with anyone doctrine of a creed. The supreme objective of the Gītā is that man's salvation must be ensured in every circumstance to whatever 'ism', belief or creed he might belong to; that he should in no case be deprived of God-Realization, for the very birth of a being 'Jīva' in human form is meant only for his 'Kalyāṇa' i.e., salvation. There is not a single circumstance in the world in which man's salvation is not possible. The reason is that God is eternally present in equal measure in every circumstance. So the seeker has just to make the right use of the circumstance facing him, whatever its nature be. The implication of 'right use' is to give up the desire for favourable circumstances in event of adverse circumstance; and to employ the favourable circumstance in the service of others. By such 'right use' man rises above both pain and pleasure and attains equanimity.

There arose in God before Creation a Saṁkalpa of multiplying Himself. By this Saṁkalpa the only one God became manifest in two forms: Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrījī for the sport of exchange and promotion of Love. Both staged a play in order to mutually conduct the sport. By God's wish, for that sport, creation of endless beings (who had been there since beginningless time) and things of the play (bodies etc.) came into being. The play takes place only when the players on both the sides are free. For this the beings were given freedom by the Lord. In this play, Śrījī's attraction lay focussed only on God, there was never a slip in the play from her side. Thus there was the sport of the promotion of love between God and Śrījī. But all the others 'Jīvas' who were there assumed their relation, by mistake, with the materials of play (origin and endful nature-born materials) for coincidental joy whereby they slipped into the rounds of birth ond death.

The materials of the play are only meant for the play, not for anyone's personal possessions. But these beings forgot to play the game and misusing the received freedom began to regard the materials, bodies etc., of the play as personally their own. Therefore, they got entangled in the materials and totally turned away from God. Now, if these beings shunning the perishable sense materials of forms etc., are inclined towards God, then they can be free from the great pain of births and deaths for ever. Thus withdrawing from the world, the 'Jīva' should realize his eternal unison with God— Only for this realization there has been this descent of the Bhagavad Gītā.

YOGA OF GĪTĀ

The word 'Yoga' of the Gītā is pregnant with various wondrous meanings. We can place them under heads:

(i) Derived from the root 'Yujir yoge' (युजिर् योगे) the word 'Yoga' has the implied meaning — eternal kinship with Equanimous (समरूप) God; as in 'Samatvaṁ yoga ucyate' (2.48) etc. This very meaning has acquired dominance in the Gītā.

(ii) Derived from the root 'Yuj samādhau' the word 'Yoga' means — stability of Citta i.e., state of trance during meditation; as in 'Yatroparamate cittaṁ niruddhaṁ yoga-sevayā' (6.20) etc.

(iii) Derived from the root 'Yuj saṁyamane' the word 'Yoga' means — controlling power, divine prowess, magnetic impact; as in 'Paśya me yogamaiśvaram' (9.5) etc.

Wherever the word 'Yoga' has appeared in the Gītā it has in it the dominance of one of the aforesaid three meanings, the other two meanings having a secondary place only; as in the word Yoga derived from 'Yujir yoge', there is the predominance of the meaning of equanimity, though on realization of equanimity, meditational stability and divine prowess* also accrue automatically. In the word 'Yoga' from 'Yuj samādhau' there is the predominance of transcendental stability, but on achievement of this state equanimity and prowess do follow automatically. In the word 'Yoga' from 'Yuj saṁyamane' there is the dominance of divine prowess and majesty, but on realization of this prowess, equanimity and stability also follow suit of their own. Thus the word 'Yoga' of the Gītā has very pervasive and profounder meanings.

In the Yogadarśana of sage Patañjali, the word 'Yoga' is the name for the control of Cittavṛttis (mental) tendencies — 'Yogaścittavṛttinirodhaḥ' (1.2) and the effect of that Yoga has been pointed out as the lodgement of the Draṣṭā (the witness) into one's own Self:'Tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe'vasthānam' (1.3). In this way, the very result of Yoga as depicted in the Yoga-darśana of Patañjali has been given the name 'Yoga' in the Gītā (2.48; 6.23). The implication is that the self-proved natural state of equanimity totally cut off from the Cittavṛttis is called 'Yoga' by the Gītā. On realizing lodgement in equanimity (eternal unison—Nityayoga), there is never a disunion or deviation from it. There is a desireless transcendental state (Nirvikalpa avasthā) when there is control over of mental tendencies. But on realization of equanimity there is the 'desireless transcendental awareness— Nirvikalpa bodha–which is the illuminator of the statelessness as well as of all the states.

With a view to enable the seeker to have experience of equanimity or eternal unison, the three Yoga-ways have been expounded in the Gītā—the Path of Action, the Path of Knowledge and the Path of Devotion. There is the inalienable relationship of the three bodies—the gross, the subtle and the causal–with the world. So, employ all these three in the service of others—this is the Path of Action. Realization of one's own establishment in one's own self after dissociating from the three bodies—this is the Path of Knowledge. And surrendering one self to God—this is the Path of Devotion. In order to attain salvation, man is endowed with three powers (i) power to do (strength), (ii) power to know (knowledge) and (iii) power to believe (faith). The power to do is for rendering service of the world selflessly—that is Karmayoga; the power to know is meant to know the self—that is Jñānayoga; and the power to believe is 'I am God's and God is mine' and then to be totally surrendered to God—this is Bhaktiyoga. He in whom interest to do dominates is qualified to adopt the Path of Action. He in whom inquisitiveness to know the self dominates is qualified for the Path of Knowledge. He, in whom faith and belief in

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* The power of creation, preservation and destruction etc., of the entire universe which belongs only to God—that power the Yogī does not acquire—'Jagadvyāpāravarjam (Brahmasūtra 4.4.17). The power which a Yogī gains enables him to conquer Nature (Gītā 5.19) meaning that no amount of favourable or unfavourable circumstances can in anyway affect him.

God dominates, is qualified for the Path of Devotion. All these three Yoga-pathways are independent means of God-Realization. All other means are implicit in these three pathways only.*

The main object of all the pathways is to accomplish breach with the non-self. So, there does remain a difference in different disciplines of conducting this breach, but after completion of this breach with Matter (non-self) all the means lead to God-Realization or equanimity. To this very realization of 'Paramātmatattva', the Gītā has given the name 'Yoga'; and verily this is called 'Nityayoga'–the Eternal Union.

Such is not the case that there has been a description in the Gītā of mere Karmayoga, or of mere Jñānayoga, or of mere Bhaktiyoga. Besides these three Yogas, there is in it also a description of Yajña (sacrifice), Dāna (gift), Tapa (penance), Dhyānayoga (Yoga of meditation), Prāṇāyāma (control of breath), Haṭhayoga (austere discipline of body etc.), Layayoga (Yoga of rhythmic unison) etc. Its specific reason is that Arjuna's questions in the Gītā are not about war but about salvation. Similarly Lord Kṛṣṇa also did not mean at all that the war should be waged. Arjuna definitely wanted to attain salvation (2.7; 3.2; 5.1). Therefore, as many means of welfare which have been told in the scriptures, have all been with precision detailed in the Gītā. Keeping in view all those means the Gītā is specially held in high esteem. Reason being that seeker might belong to any belief, any creed, or any doctrine, but one's salvation is indeed dear to all.

Two Disciplines of Seeking

In the 'Jīva'-being—there is an 'Aṁśa' (part) of the Conscious God and an 'Aṁśa' of the inert Nature. By the dominance of the conscious-part, he wishes for God; and by the dominance of the inert part, he wishes for the world. Between these two wishes the wish for God is sure to be fulfilled, but the desire for world is never to be fulfilled at all. Some worldly desires seemingly to be fulfilled are never satiated, but owing to worldly attachment ever new desires go on arising. In fact, the satisfaction of worldly desires or achievement of worldly goods is not under the command of desire, but is under the command of Karma. But God-Realization is not under the power of Karma. God-Realization happens by sheer intense longing of one's own self. Its reason is that every Karma has its beginning and end; so is its result too bound to have a beginning and an end. How can then the beginningless and endless God be realized by the Karmas which are origin and end bound ? But the seekers have often so understood that as the worldly objects are achieved by the predominance of activities, so also the realization of God will likewise take place through the dominance only of activity; and as the assistance of body, senses, mind and intellect has to be taken in gaining the object of the world, so also in God- Realization too the assistance of body, senses, mind, intellect will have to be likewise entertained. Therefore, such seekers prastise spiritual discipline with the help of inertness (body etc.) in order to realize God.

By practising for long time in the Yoga of Meditation i.e., gradually fixing mind in God when the 'Citta' gets controlled, it, having no worldly desire in it and being incapable of holding God on account of its own inertness, becomes unconcerned with the world. On Citta becoming unconcerned, the seeker becomes completely cut off from mind or inertness and he gains experience of Godhead by himself (Gītā 6.20). But that seeker who from the beginning having accepted his axiomatic and eternal unison with God without accepting in the least his kinship with inert matter, traverses the course of his discipline he realizes the supreme Tattva

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* The Lord has told in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata:
"yogāstrayo mayā proktā nṛṇām śreyovidhitsayā; jñānam karma ca bhaktiśca nopāyo'nyosti kutracit (11.20.6)." i.e.
"Three Yogas have been stated by Me for seekers eager for their welfare: those of knowledge, action and devotion. There is nowhere any other way of total well-being."

early and with ease.

Thus for seekers who wish to realize God there are two disciplines or ways of seeking. The discipline in which there remains dependence on 'Antaḥkaraṇa' (the Inner Instrument) i.e., wherein the seeker observes the course of discipline with assistance of inertness goes by the name of 'Karaṇa Sāpekṣa Śailī' (Discipline aided by the Inner Instrument) and the discipline in which the seeker, from the very beginning, follows the discipline by himself without the assistance of inertness can be called 'Karaṇa Nirapekṣa Śailī' (Discipline unaided by the Inner Instrument). Though God-Realization in both these disciplines takes place only by Karaṇa Nirapekṣatā i.e., by one's own self (after complete breach with inertness). To the realization through 'Karaṇa Sāpekṣa Śailī' comes very late whereas that realization happens immediately through 'Karaṇa Nirapekṣa Śailī'. There are four main differences in these two disciplines of seeking:

(i) There is dependence on Matter (body-senses-mind-intellect) in the 'Karaṇa Sāpekṣa Śailī' but no such dependence is there in the 'Karaṇa Nirapekṣa Śailī' instead the assumed relationship with Matter is to be sundered.

(ii) There is the creation of a new state in the 'Karaṇa Sāpekṣa Śailī' but there is the realization after breach with all states, of the reality in the 'Karaṇa Nirapekṣa Śailī.'

(iii) There is in the 'Karaṇa Sāpekṣa Śailī' an acquisition of natural powers (Siddhis), but in 'Karaṇa Nirapekṣa Śailī' there is a direct realization of Reality, on severance of relationship with Matter.*

(iv) God-Realization in the 'discipline aided by the Instrument' is never immediate, but in the 'discipline unaided by the Instrument' God-Realization is immediate either after surrendering to God or by breach of relationship with inertness or by getting established in the self.

In the Yogadarśana of Patañjali importance is given to the 'discipline aided by the Instrument' in the realization of Yoga, but in the Gītā importance is given only to the 'discipline unaided by the Instrument' in the realization of Yoga (योगसिद्धि). It is all right if the mind gets tuned to God, but if mind is not so tuned then nothing happens— this is the sum of the 'discipline aided by the Instrument'. Whether or not mind is attuned to God, it does not matter; but one's self should be established in God—this is the 'discipline unaided by the Instrument'. The import and implication of all this is that there is, in the 'Karaṇa Sāpekṣa Śailī', the relationship of mind, intellect with God, whereas in the 'Karaṇa Nirapekṣa Śailī' there is the self's direct relation with God, with a total breach of ties with mind intellect complex. Therefore, the realization in the 'Karaṇa Sāpekṣa Śailī' is processed in order by exercise, but there is no need of exercise in the 'Karṇa Nirapekṣa Śailī'. The reason is that there is the Self's axiomatic eternal union (Nityayoga) with God. Thus there is no necessity of any practice in believing or knowing one's unitive relation with God; as on accomplishment of marriage when the woman accepts the man as her husband, she needs to do no exercise in her so believing. So also, on being told by someone that 'this is Gaṅgājī' no exercise is to be done even to know this.† In the 'Karaṇa Sāpekṣa' Śailī' thus there does remain the primacy of doing a practice for one's own self, but in the 'Karaṇa Nirapekṣa Śailī' the primacy is only of

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The same thing has been observed in the Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa and Devī Bhāgavata:
"mārgāstrayo mayā proktāḥ purā mokṣāptisādhakāḥ; karmayogo jñānayogo bhaktiyogaśca śāśvataḥ" (Adhyātma. 7.7.59).
"mārgāstrayo me vikhyātā mokṣaprāptau nagādhipa; karmayogo jñānayogo bhaktiyogaśca sattama (Devi. 7.37.3).

* If it were possible to have direct God-Realization with the 'Discipline Aided By Instrument' (Cittavṛttinirodha), then the 'Vibhūti-Pāda' (wherein 'Siddhis' are described) of Patañjali's Yogadarśana would have been futile. Those 'Siddhis' or powers which are acquired by the Discipline Aided By Instrument are hurdles on the path of God-Realization. Even in the Pātañjala Yogadarśana the 'Siddhis' are regarded as obstacles—'Te samādhāvupasargā vyutthāne siddhayaḥ' (3.37) i.e., they (Siddhis) are obstacles in the attainment of Samādhi and are 'powers' during 'Vyutthāna' (behavioural world); 'Sthānyupanimantraṇe saṅgasmayākaraṇam punaraniṣṭaprasaṅgāt' (3.51) i.e., on being called by the gods guarding the directions (by offering temptations of the enjoyments of their realms), neither should one have attachment for them nor should one take pride in them; because in doing so there is again a possibility of the loss of realization (Anista) or fall.

† In fact, no worldly illustration is completely be fitting pertaining to the matter of knowing or believing in God. The reason

knowing (Viveka) and believing (Bhāva).

'I have no relation with inertness (body etc.) at all'—even in want of such an experience if a seeker firmly believes this from the very outset, then too such a realization clearly dawns upon him. As he was under bondage by this mistaken belief that 'I am the body and the body is mine', so too by cultivating the right belief that 'I am not the body and the body is not mine', the seeker becomes liberated; because such is a principle– by not believing, the accepted belief tends to melt away. This very thing God, has told in the Gītā that an ignorant person, accepting his link with the body, regards himself as the doer of things happening— 'Ahaṅkāravimūḍhātmā kartāhamiti manyate' (3.27). But the enlightened person does not regard himself as the doer of those happening activities— 'Naiva kiñcitkaromīti yukto manyeta tattvavit' (5.8). It accrues, therefore, that to root out an unreal belief, it is necessary to harbour a real belief.

'I am a Hindu', 'I am a Brāhmaṇa', 'I am a Sādhu' etc., such beliefs become so firm that till man does not give them up by himself, no one else can make him give them up. Similarly the beliefs that 'I am the body', 'I am the doer' etc., also become so firm that it seems difficult to the seeker to give them up. But these worldly beliefs being unreal and untrue, are not everlasting, but are instead destructible. As against these, the beliefs such as 'I am not body', 'I am God's' etc., being real and true never become extinct, but their's is only a forgetfulness, a turning of back on them. Therefore, the real belief on becoming firmly rooted does not remain as mere belief but is transmuted into a realized awareness (experience).

Though the 'Discipline aided by Inner Instrument' has been described in the Gītā (as in, 4.24–30; 34, 6.10–28; 8.8–16; 15.11 etc.), yet the 'Discipline unaided by Instrument' alone has been described with domineering emphasis (as in, 2.48,55; 3.17; 4.38; 5.12 (first half); 6.5; 9.30-31; 12.12; 18.62,66,73 etc.). Its reason is that God desires that the seekers should realize Him early and easily. In the second place, Arjuna has sought from Him the means of his salvation on having been confronted with the situation of war. Thus the 'Discipline unaided by the Instrument' alone can be of use for his salvation; because as per this discipline of 'Karaṇa Nirapekṣa Śailī' man can realize his salvation while doing his activities—Karma as per scriptural injunctions in each and every circumstance. Only through this Discipline (without any practice) Arjuna's infatuation was ended and memory (of his real Self) revived (18.73).

The 'Discipline Unaided By the Instrument' is useful for all in equal measure; because there is in it no necessity of any special ability, condition etc. In this discipline, by developing a sheer intense desire for God-Realization, the immediate breach with inertness being accomplished, the eternally available God is realized. Darkness of innumerable years there might be, but as it may be destroyed by mere kindling a candle, so also a very old relation with inertness (of countless births) there might be, it is sundered by mere surging up of keen yearning for God-Realization. Therefore, this intense yearning is a much higher thing than even 'Samādhi'—a state of meditative poise—born of Karaṇa Sāpekṣatā. For, there is even a deviation from the highest state of 'Nirvikalpasamādhi'– transcendental equipoise — into routine behaviour i.e., there is a beginning and end of 'Samādhi' also. Till there is the beginning and end of any state of spiritual progress, it means that there is affinity with Matter. As soon as this affinity is renounced, there is no deviation from the spiritual discipline viz.,

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is that in believing or knowing the world there is the association of mind and intellect, but in believing and Knowing God there is no association of mind and intellect at all, meaning thereby God's experience is the realization by one's own self, not by mind-intellect. Secondly, the act of believing and knowing the world has a beginning and an end, but there is no such beginning and end in believing and knowing God. Reason being that there is no relation of our being with the world at all, whereas our relation with God is since the very beginning and will always be so.

eternal union with God* is realized.

In fact there never was a disunion (Viyoga) from God, this is not even possible. There appears separation from God because of our assumed affinity with the world. As soon as this assumed affinity is renounced, a man intensely eager for God-Realization immediately realizes his eternal union with Him and gets permanently established in Him.

Even the need to purify the Inner Instrument is only in the 'Karaṇa Sāpekṣa Śailī', not in the 'Karaṇa Nirapekṣa Śailī'. As on a pen being good, the writing can be good but not the writer, so also on the Inner Instrument being pure the activities can be pure but not the doer. The doer becomes pure on breach of tie with the Inner Instrument; because the very belief of one's kinship with this Instrument is the root impurity.

Axiomatic is 'Jīva's' (the being's) eternal Yoga with the Ever-attained (Nityaprāpta) God; thus there is no need of instrument in His realization. Only the gaze needs to be turned that side, as is observed in Śrī Rāmacaritamānasa–'Śaṅkara sahaja sarūpu samhārā' (1.58.4) meaning, Lord Śaṅkara contemplated on the nature of His own self, turned his look upon Himself. A thing looked upon is that which is with us since ever before and only by turning the gaze it becomes known that it is there. In the same way, by simply viewing at it, the Nityayoga is realized. But on account of the desire, expectation and enjoyment of worldly pleasures, a great difficulty is felt in turning over eye or attention towards it, and in realizing it. Till the mind remains tied to the acquisition and enjoyment of worldly objects, there is no force in man to turn his gaze towards the nature of his real Self. If by any reason or specific chance or perception the gaze happens to be toward it, it would be extremely difficult for it to stay there permanently. Reason being that the intense endearment (Priyatā) for the destructible materials which resides in the heart, that endearment does not permit one to understand one's eternal and axiomatic relationship with God; and even if it is rationally understood, it does not permit its stability. Yes, if intense longing awakens as to how this Reality (Tattva) is realized, then this longing has the force to liquidate the very attachment of the world.

All the three Yogas – Karmayoga, Jñānayoga and Bhaktiyoga— spoken of in the Gītā are realizable through the discipline of 'Karaṇa Nirapekṣa' i.e., through one's own self. Reason being that the activity and material are neither ours nor for ourselves, instead they belong to others and are for the service of others. The belief or thought thus discriminately arrived at that 'I am not the body, nor is the body mine, I am God's and God is mine' is not born of the 'discipline aided by Instrument' (practice), because there is in it a breach of tie with inertness. Thus in Karmayoga the seeker himself gives up the inertness; in Jñānayoga the seeker himself realizes his own self; and in Bhaktiyoga the seeker himself becomes surrendered to God.

In this 'Sādhaka Sañjīvanī' commentary on the Gītā too the primary importance is given to the 'Discipline Unaided By the Instrument'; because this commentary has been written keeping in view as to how the seekers may attain salvation with ease and without delay.

Apropos This Commentary

Since my early age I had a special interest in the Gītā. Meditative introspection on the Gītā and the association and utterance of the saints and the great souls have been of immense help to me in understanding the real import of the Gītā. This Gītā brims with ideas, infinite and astounding, which provide great consolation. The ability to understand these ideas fully and express them with perfection is not in my power.

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* Till there exists a tie with inertness, two states do obtain; because changeable as it is the inert Nature never remains uniform. Thus these two states of entry into and exit from equipoise—'Samādhi' and 'Vyuithāna'—arise out of their tie with inertness. On severance of tie with inertness what remains is 'Sahajāvasthā', eternal Stateless State, which is called 'Sahaja Samādhi' by the saints. There is never then any deviation from it.

But when certain Gītā-loving gentle ones pressed me hard and especially urged me, there did arise a desire of dictating the commentary on the Gītā with this object in view that its hidden, heart-touching ideas—Mārmikabhāva—may be revealed to my understanding, and if others also introspect and meditate upon them, those ideas may become intelligible to them too.

First of all, a commentary on the twelfth chapter was dictated which was published in Vikrama Saṁvat 2030 by the name of 'Gītā Kā Bhaktiyoga'. A few years latter a commentary on the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters was dictated which was published in Vikrama Saṁvat 2035 as 'Gītā Kā Jñānayoga'. A thought arose thereafter that since there are three 'Yogas'—Karmayoga, Jñānayoga and Bhaktiyoga—it would be appropriate if three books are prepared on the three Yogas. With this view, a commentary on the twelfth chapter was recast, enlarged and combining with it the commentary on the fifteenth chapter it was published in Vikrama Saṁvat 2039 as 'Gītā Kā Bhaktiyoga' (second edition). Then a commentary on the third, fourth and fifth chapters was dictated. It was published in two volumes under the title 'Gītā Kā Karmayoga'. Its delayed publication came in Vikrama Saṁvat 2040.

A different kind of diction (Śailī) was followed in the fore-mentioned three books—'Gītā Kā Bhaktiyoga', 'Gītā Kā Jñānayoga', and 'Gītā Kā Karmayoga'; the order of Śailī in them began with first the context (Sambandha), then the verse (Śloka), then the emotional import (Bhāva) then the analysis of the verse (Anvaya); and then the 'Pada'-wise commentary. After the publication of these three volumes the diction of writing was again changed in this order; first, the context, then the verse, and then the commentary. In this (change) there came the inspiration from others also. The idea behind this change of diction was that the reading material should be reduced a little and written early so that the readers may not have to spend more time in reading and that the book in prepared speedily to reach the readers early. With this Śailī, the commentary on the sixteenth and the seventeenth chapters was first dictated. This was published in Vikram Saṁvat 2039 by the name of 'Gītā Kī Saṁpatti Aura Śraddhā'. A commentary on the eighteenth chapter was dictated thereafter which was also published in 2039 under the title: 'Gītā Kā Sāra.'

After the commentary on the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth chapters someone suggested that it would be proper if the meaning of the 'Śloka' was also provided; for if the reader first grasped the meaning of the 'Śloka', it would be convenient for him to follow the commentary. Thus in the second edition of 'Gītā Kī Saṁpatti Aura Śraddhā', (Vikrama Saṁvat 2040) the meaning of the 'Ślokas' was also added. Together with the addition of the meaning of the verses, an alteration in the order of commentary on the 'Padas' was also introduced.

After this, a commentary on the tenth and eleventh chapters was dictated and published under the name of 'Gītā Kī Vibhūti Aura Viśvarūpa-Darśana'. Then was dictated a commentary on the seventh, eighth and ninth chapters which was published as 'Gītā Kī Rājavidyā'. Thereafter a commentary on the sixth chapter was dictated which was titled and published as 'Gītā Kā Dhyānayoga'. In the end was dictated the commentary on the first and second chapters. It was published as 'Gītā Kā Ārambha'. All these four books were published in Vikrama Saṁvat 2041.

Thus it was that by the grace of God a commentary on the whole of the Gītā was published by the Gita Press in total ten separate volumes. In the work of its publication several difficulties of paper etc., continued to arise, but with the effort of 'Satsaṅgī' brothers the work of publishing them went on progressing. People also accepted these books with enthusiasm and pleasure as a response whereto several books underwent two, three editions.

This commentary has not been dictated sitting at one place and the order of dictation has also not been from first chapter to

the eighteenth one. Therefore, many contradictions may appear from the pre-and-post (Pūrvāpara) view. But the seekers will feel no difficulty in it anywhere. At some places a difference in interpretation has also taken place; but in that of the Karmayoga, Jñānayoga and Bhaktiyoga– all the three are independently instrumental in God-Realization—there is no difference as for as the result is concerned. The orientation (Bhāva) while dictating the commentary has been as to 'how early the seekers can be benefitted. For this reason there has been in the commentary a change in its language, diction etc.

In this commentary the interpretation of very many Ślokas runs contrary to other commentaries. But its intention is not in the least to show that other commentaries are wrong, instead I have interpreted them as it seemed non-controversially apt, corresponding to the context, rationally viable, satisfying and dear to me. There has never been my idea of anyone's refutation or anyone's confirmation.

The meaning of Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā is very much profound. By its reading-teaching, introspection-meditation, and contemplation unique, strange and ever-new ideas and emotions continue to spring forth whereby the mind and intellect, being thrilled becomes contented. While dictating this commentary whenever the mood to dictate these ideas arose, a strange flood used to overwhelm me as to how and which of the ideas I should dictate—and I used to find myself at bay in this matter. Yet whoever are my associates, respectworthy friends—at their behest and persuasion I could dictate a little. They used to write down those ideas and, having revised them they used to publish them in the form of books. Thereafter, whenever there arose occasions to pry into those books, several discripencies were felt to have crept into them and it appeared that all the ideas have not been expressed, many have been left out. So revisions and enlargements continued to be made in them again and again. Therefore, the readers are requested to accept and give importance only to the contents written latter instead of those written earlier.

The commentary on the whole Gītā being in several separate volumes, a difficulty was felt in their republication and in obtaining all of them together simultaneously— keeping this view the commentary on the whole Gītā has been published now in one single volume in the form of the present book. Before doing this, the whole commentary published earlier has again been looked into and necessary revision, alteration and enlargement have also been introduced. Commentary on the thirteenth and the fourteenth chapters has been re- dictated. Care has been taken to maintain the uniformity of language and diction. Many things which were deemed unnecessary have been omitted, many new have been inserted, and many others have been shifted from one place and given appropriate place elsewhere. The things which have been variously repeated have been omitted as far as possible though not completely. Repetitions worthy of receiving special attention and considered useful for seekers have not been omitted. Several short-comings are thus possible in this work, for which I seek from the readers pardon with folded hands. Readers are simult-aneously requested to kindly intimate the mistakes they come across. This will facilitate their rectification in its future editions.

A compendium of research articles, of new and novel themes pertaining to the Gītā has been prepared separately and published under the title 'Gītā Darpaṇa'.

By meditating and contemplating on the Gītā and by dictating the commentary on it, I have been very much spiritually benefitted; I also have a clear understanding of the subject matter of the Gītā. This is my conviction that if other brothers-sisters meditate on it, they will also be spiritually benefitted. I donot have even an iota of doubt about it that by doing meditation and contemplation on the Gītā a great gain is acquired.

कृष्णानुग्रहदायिका सकरुणा गीता समाराधिता
कर्मज्ञानविरागभक्तिरसिका ममार्थसंदर्शिका ।
सोत्कण्ठं किल साधकैरनुदिनं पेपीयमाना सदा
कल्याणं परदेवतेव दिशती संजीवनी वर्धताम् ॥

kṛṣṇānugrahadāyikā sakaruṇā gītā samārādhitā
karmajñānavirāgabhaktirasikā mamārthasaṁdarśikā
sotkaṇṭhaṁ kila sādhakairanudinaṁ pepīyamānā sadā
*kalyāṇaṁ paradevateva diśatī sañjīvanī vardhatām**

Swāmī Rāmasukhadāsa

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* Bestower of the Grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the best adorer and seeker of Gītā which is full of compassion, the loveful sharer of the truth of Karma (action), Jñāna (knowledge); Virāga (renunciation) and Bhakti (devotion), the shower of subtler and deeper meanings, ever sought and enjoyed with enthusiasm by the seekers, and the provider of Kalyāṇa like the Supreme Lord, this Sādhaka Sañjīvanī may continue to promote and perpetuate these in seekers'life.

Śrī Hariḥ

Contents

Verse No.	Topic	Page No.
	First Chapter	
1—11	Description of the names of the chief great-charioteers of the Pāṇḍava and the Kaurava army ..... (An Important Fact 10)	1—11
12—19	Description of the sound of conches of the two armies ·	11—17
20—27	Survey of the army by Arjuna	17—22
28—47	Arjuna is filled with deep sorrow and unmanliness; he recounts the evil consequences of the destruction of the race and family traditions and Sañjaya describes Arjuna's condition that he is overwhelmed with grief ..... (An Important Fact 29, 34)	23—35
	Concluding words	35—36
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the first chapter	36
	Metres used in the first chapter	36
	Second Chapter	
1—10	Sañjaya describes the dialogue between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna mentioning Arjuna's sorrow and unmanliness · (An Exceptional Fact 41)	37—46
11—30	Description of Sāṅkhya Yoga (Discipline of Knowledge) · (An Exceptional Fact 49, 53, 56, 56; A Vital Fact 54; Something Note-Worthy 60, 62, 67)	46—68
31—38	Propriety of fighting a righteous war for a Kṣatriya (member of the warrior class) ..... (Something Note-Worthy regarding this section 72)	68—73
39—53	Description of the Discipline of Action ..... (Something Note-Worthy 78; Something Note-Worthy about Equanimity 75; A Vital Fact 81; Something Note-Worthy about intellect and Equanimity 84)	73—89
54—72	Description of the marks etc., of the stable in mind ..... (Something remarkable 98; Something Note-Worthy 106; How to get rid of Egoism and the sense of Mine 104)	89—106
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the second chapter	107
	Metres used in second chapter	107
	Third Chapter	
1—8	Necessity of the performance of duty, being free from attachment from the view-point of the Discipline of Knowledge and Action ..... (A Vital Fact 114; Something remarkable 112; Something Note-Worthy 116; A Vital Fact pertaining to spiritual discipline 122)	110—122
9—19	Necessity of the performance of duty for the sake of sacrifice and for maintaining the tradition of the cycle of creation ..... (A Vital Fact 124; A Vital Fact pertaining to duty and right 127; An Important Fact pertaining to duty 129; A Vital Fact 138; An Important Fact 139; A Vital Fact 143; Something Note-Worthy 141)	122—144

Verse No.	Topic	Page No.
20—29	Necessity of the performance of duty to set examples for others ····· (A Vital Fact pertaining to God-Realization 145; An Important Fact 147, 152, 156, 156, 159; How to know this Truth ? 157; Something Note-Worthy 153; A Vital Fact pertaining to Nature and spirit 158)	144—160
30—35	Inspiration for the Performance of one's own duty, being free from attachment and aversion ····· (An Important Fact pertaining to surrender 161; An Important Fact pertaining to desire 162; An Important Fact 163; The means of overcoming attachment and aversion 170; A Vital Fact pertaining to service 173; A Vital Fact 177; A Vital Fact pertaining to one's Own duty and the duty of another 178)	161—179
36—43	Inspiration to kill desire, the root of sins ····· (An Important Fact pertaining to desire 181; An Important Fact 183,185,187; A Vital Fact 191,193)	179—195
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the third chapter ·····	195
	Metres used in the third chapter ·····	195
	Fourth Chapter	
1—15	Tradition of the Discipline of Action and divine character of births and actions of God ····· (An Important Fact 199; A Vital Fact 205; An Important fact 210; An Important Fact pertaining to incarnation 212; A Vital Fact 218; An Important Fact 222)	197—227
16—32	Description about the reality of actions and different forms of sacrifices ····· (An Important Fact 229; A Vital Fact 230; An Important Fact 242; A Vital Fact 244; An Important Fact 248)	228—251
33—42	Glory of the Disciplines of Knowledge and Action and inspiration to follow them ····· (The common method to attain knowledge 252; An Important Fact 258,260,261)	251—264
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the fourth chapter ·····	264
	Metres used in the fourth chapter ·····	264
	Fifth Chapter	
1—6	Identity of the Disciplines of Knowledge and Action and glory of the Discipline of Action ····· (A Vital Fact 269; An Important Fact 274)	265—275
7—12	Description of the Disciplines of Action and Knowledge (An Important Fact 276,280; A Vital Fact 285)	275—286
13—26	The Discipline of Knowledge with its fruit ····· (An Important Fact pertaining to equanimity 293)	286—305
27—29	Description of Meditation and Devotion ·····	306—310
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the fifth chapter ·····	310
	Metres used in the fifth chapter ·····	310
	Sixth Chapter	
1—4	The Discipline of Action and marks of the man who has attained to Yoga (equanimity) ····· (An Exceptional Fact 313; The methods to renounce all	311—317

Verse No.	Topic	Page No.
	thoughts of the world 317)	
5—9	Inspiration for redeeming the self; and the marks of the God-Realized soul ····· (An Exceptional Fact about God-Realization 318; How to remain calm in honour and dishonour? 321; An Exceptional Fact 323)	317—324
10—15	Description of posture and meditation on God (with attributes and form) with its fruit ····· (An Exceptional Fact 325)	324—329
16—23	Description of rules and meditation on God with its fruit · (An Exceptional Fact 331, 332, 334)	329—337
24—28	Description of meditation on God who is attributeless and formless with its fruit ····· (An Exceptional Fact in connection with meditation 339; Devices to concentrate the mind on God 341)	338—342
29—32	Experience of those who meditate on God Who is endowed with attributes and Who is attributeless ····· (An Exceptional Fact 346)	342—346
33—36	Subject of mind-control ····· (The methods to develop dispassion 349; A Vital Fact 350)	347—351
37—47	Destiny of the man who has fallen from Yoga; and glory of the man of exclusive devotion ····· (An Exceptional Fact 352,356,358; A Vital Fact 359; An Exceptional Fact 362)	351—363
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the sixth chapter ·····	363
	Metres used in the sixth chapter ·····	363
	Seventh Chapter	
1—7	The Lord promises to describe His integral being and explains that all beings are born by the union of the two—higher and lower Natures while He is the root cause of all of them ····· (An Exceptional Fact 366; Synonyms of Śaraṇāgati (surrender) 366; An Exceptional Fact pertaining to Knowledge (Wisdom) and Real Knowledge of Manifest Divinity 369; An Exceptional Fact 374)	365—377
8—12	God's manifestations in the form of cause ····· (An Exceptional Fact 380; An Important Fact 383)	378—384
13—19	Description of those who take refuge in God and those who don't take refuge in Him ····· (An Important Fact 387; An Exceptional Fact 390; A Vital Fact 391,396; Greatness of the great souls 397)	384—398
20—23	Description of the worship of other gods with its fruit ··· (An Exceptional Fact 401)	398—401
24—30	Condemnation of those who don't know God's influence and glories and eulogy of His devotees; and description of His integral being ····· (An Exceptional Fact 402, 409; An Exceptional Fact About God's Entire Form 412; A special note on the chapter 414)	401—414
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the seventh Chapter ··	415

Verse No.	Topic	Page No.
	Metres used in the seventh chapter	415
	Eighth Chapter	
1—7	Arjuna puts seven questions, the Lord answers them and exhorts him to think of Him at all times ..... (An Important fact 420,423,424; Some Important Facts about remembrance 425)	417—426
8—16	Description of worship of God Who is with attributes and formless; attributeless and formless; and with attributes and form with fruit ..... (An Exceptional Fact 432,434; An Important Fact 433)	426—434
17—22	Description of the duration of cosmic day and night and the glory of God and devotion ..... (An Exceptioinal Fact 439)	434—439
23—28	Description of Bright and Dark paths and glory of the Yogī who knows them ..... (An Exceptional Fact 442)	439—445
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the eighth chapter	445
	Metres used in the eighth chapter	445
	Ninth Chapter	
1—6	Description of Vijñāna (realization) with its glory ..... (Knowledge and Realization 448; An Exceptional Fact 451; A Vital Fact 453; An Important Fact 454)	447—455
7—10	Description of New-Creation and Final-Dissolution	455—458
11—15	Condemnation of those who don't know God's glory; mention of those who embrace a demoniac, devilish and deluding nature and description of the worship of those devotees who embrace the divine nature	458—463
16—19	Description of God's glories in the form of effect and cause	463—465
20—25	Worship with and without an interested motive with fruit · (An Important Fact 470,471)	466—472
26—34	Offering of objects and actions to God, the fruit of this offering; Description of those who are eligible for devotion and description of devotion ..... (An Important Fact 473,474,475; A Vital Fact 480, 482, 483; An Exceptional Fact 481; An Important Fact 485; Harmony of the topic in the seventh and the ninth chapters 486)	472—487
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the ninth chapter	488
	Metres used in the ninth chapter	488
	Tenth Chapter	
1—7	Mention of the glory and Yoga of the Lord and the reward of knowing them ..... (An Important Fact 493,494)	489—495
8—11	Devotion to God and its fruit; and the glory of God's grace ..... (An Important Fact 496,499)	495—499
12—18	Arjuna eulogizes the Lord and prays to Him to describe His Yoga and glories	499—503

Verse No.	Topic	Page No.
19—42	Description of the Lord's glories and Yoga by Him · (An Important Fact 517, 519)	503—520
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the tenth chapter ·	521
	Metres used in the tenth chapter ·····	521
	Eleventh Chapter	
1—8	Arjuna requests the Lord to reveal His Cosmic-Form; the Lord confers divine vision on him ····· (An Important Fact 528, 529)	523—529
9—14	Sañjaya describes the Cosmic-Form to Dhṛtarāṣṭra ·	529—532
15—31	Arjuna beholds the Cosmic-Form and eulogizes it · (An Important Fact 533; A Vital Fact 537)	532—546
32—35	The Lord introduces His most terrible form and orders Arjuna to fight ····· (An Important Fact 549)	546—550
36—46	Arjuna eulogizes the Lord in His Cosmic-Form and offers prayer to Him ····· (An Important Fact 558)	550—559
47—50	The Lord explains that the Cosmic-Form is very rare indeed and consoles Arjuna who is terrified ····· (An Important Fact 561; How long did Sañjaya and Arjuna have that divine vision ? 564)	560—565
51—55	The Lord glorifies His four-armed form and the means by which it can be seen ····· (An Important Fact 568, 569)	565—570
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the eleventh chapter ·····	570
	Metres used in the eleventh chapter ·····	570
	Twelfth Chapter	
1—12	The Lord pronounces His verdict who is superior the worshippers of God with attributes or without attributes; and mentioins four spiritual paths which lead to God-Realization ····· (An Important Fact 576,580,585; An Important Fact pertaining to God-Realization 586; An Important Fact pertaining to the renunciation of the fruit of action 593; An Important Fact pertaining to the spiritual discipline 594)	571—595
13—20	Thirty-nine marks of the devotees who have realized God ····· (A Vital Fact 605; An Important Fact pertaining to this topic 607)	596—610
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the twelfth chapter ·	611
	Metres used in the twelfth chapter ·····	611
	Thirteenth Chapter	
1—18	Discussion of Kṣetra (body) Kṣetrajña (soul), knowledge and worth-knowing (God) with devotion ····· (A Vital Fact 614; An Impotant Fact 620, 621, 623, 629)	613—636
19—34	Discussion on Nature and soul ····· (A Vital Fact 645)	636—650
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the thirteenth chapter ·	651

Verse No.	Topic	Page No.
	Metres used in the thirteenth chapter	651
	Fourteenth Chapter	
1—4	Glory of knowledge and emanation of creation from the union of Nature and soul	653—656
5—18	Description of the three modes of Nature (of goodness, of passion and of ignorance) ..... (An Important Fact 657,660; A Vital Fact 665; An Important Fact 669,670)	656—671
19—27	Means of God-Realization; and marks of the man who has transcended the three modes of Nature ..... (An Important Fact 674)	671—679
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the fourteenth chapter ·	679
	Metres used in the fourteenth chapter	680
	Fifteenth Chapter	
1—6	Description of the tree of creation; and surrender the self to God, having cut as under this tree, and the Abode of God ..... (An Important Fact 687; An Important Fact pertaining to dispassion 688; Some easy means of renouncing this Affinity for the world 689; An Important Fact 693, 694)	681—697
7—11	Reality about the soul (self) and description of those who know it and those who don't know it ..... (An Important Fact 699,702,703; A Vital Fact 705,707)	697—709
12—15	Description of the glory of God ..... (An Important Fact pertaining to God 713; An Important Fact pertaining to the topic 715; A Vital Fact 716)	709—716
16—20	Description of Kṣara (perishable, the mundane) Akṣara, the imperishable (soul) and the Supreme Soul (God) and conclusion of the chapter ..... (A Vital Fact 719; An Important Fact 720)	717—724
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the fifteenth chapter ··	724
	Metres used in the fifteenth chapter	724
	Sixteenth Chapter	
1—5	Description of divine and demoniac traits with their fruits · (A Vital Fact 738,739)	726—742
6—8	Mention of the outlook of the people who embrace the demoniac nature, having a disinclination for virtuous actions ..... (An Important Fact 745)	742—746
9—16	Impure conduct and ambitions with fruit of the men embracing the demoniac nature	746—752
17—20	Evil nature of the people possessing a demoniac disposition and their evil effect ..... (An Important Fact 755)	752—756
21—24	Inspiration to act according to the ordinance of the scriptures, by being free from desire, anger and greed which are the roots of all demoniac traits	756—760
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the sixteenth chapter ·	760
	Metres used in the sixteenth chapter	760

Verse No.	Topic	Page No.
	Seventeenth Chapter	
1—6	Description of three kinds of faith and the people who possess a demoniac nature ..... (A Vital Fact 764; An Important Fact 767)	761—768
7—10	Description of tastes of food of the three types of persons of the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance ..... (An Important Fact pertaining to the topic 770; An important thought over food 771)	768—772
11—22	Three kinds of sacrifice, austerity and charity ..... (What is Sāttvika sacrifice ? 773; An Important Fact in connection with gifts 784, Gifts and their fruits 785)	773—786
23—28	Explanation of the sacred appellations Oṁ, Tat and Sat; and description of the 'Asat' (unreal or naught) action	786—790
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the seventeenth chapter	790
	Metres used in the seventeenth chapter	791
	Eighteenth Chapter	
1—12	Description of different views on renunciation; and the Discipline of Action ..... (A Vital Fact 804, An Important Fact in connection with Actions 806)	794—816
13—40	Description of the Discipline of Knowledge ..... (A Vital Fact 824; An Important Fact 830, 837, 842, 843)	816—845
41—48	Description of the Discipline of Action with devotion ..... (An Important Fact 846,855,857,859; An Important Fact concerning cow-rearing 849; What do natural duties mean ? 851)	845—861
49—55	Description of the Discipline of Knowledge ..... (An Important Fact 866)	861—868
56—66	Description of devotion to God ..... (An Important Fact pertaining to Love 870; An Important Fact 873, 875, 877; An Important Fact pertaining to Refuge 887; The Secret of Refuge 892)	868—895
67—78	Glory of the Gītā ..... (A Vital Fact 905)	896—910
	Words, letters and uvāca (said) in the eighteenth chapter ·	910
	Metres used in the eighteenth chapter	911
	Terminology (Glossary)-according to Hindi alphabet	912—919

Śrī Hariḥ

FIRST CHAPTER

Introduction

After the expiration of twelve years of exile and residing in an unknown place for one year, the Pāṇḍavas demanded half of their kingdom from Duryodhana as was his promise but he refused to give even as much land as could be covered by the point of a needle, without waging war. The Pāṇḍavas sought permission from their mother Kuntī and accepted the challenge of the war. After this decision both the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas began preparation for it.

Sage Veda Vyāsa had great affection for Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the blind king of Hastināpura. Due to his affection he said to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, "War and massacre of the Kṣatriyas is inevitable. If you want to see the scene of the battle-field, I can endow you with divine insight so as to enable you to see the scene of war from the place you are sitting." Dhṛtarāṣṭra said, "I have been blind all my life. Now I don't want to see the slaughter of my own kith and kin. But I want to hear the details of the war." Then sage Vyāsa said, "I endow Sañjaya with this divine insight by which he will know, hear and see not only the incidents of the battle-field but also the ideas in the minds of the warriors and will narrate them to you." Saying so sage Vyāsa endowed Sañjaya with the divine vision.

The battle started on the battle-field of Krukṣetra at the appointed hour. Sañjaya stayed in the battle-field for ten days. When Bhīṣma being badly wounded with the arrows, fell off the chariot, Sañjaya conveyed the message to Dhṛtarāṣṭra who at that time was present in Hastināpura. Hearing this news Dhṛtarāṣṭra was filled with great sorrow and started weeping. Then he asked Sañjaya to narrate to him all the details of the war. Upto the twenty-fourth chapter of the Bhīṣma-Parva (section), Sañjaya narrated the incidents of the war. In the beginning of the twenty-fifth chapter Dhṛtarāṣṭra asks Sañjaya—*

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच †

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।
मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ॥१॥

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca

dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ
māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāścaiva kimakurvata sañjaya

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:

O Sañjaya‡, assembled on the holy-field of Kurukṣetra, eager to fight, what did my sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu do? 1

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* In the Mahābhārata there are eighteen sections. In those sections there are several sub-sections. In the Bhīṣma section there is this Bhagavadgītā, a sub-section which begins with the thirteenth chapter of the Bhīṣma section and ends with the forty-second chapter.

† Within the dialogue between Vaiśampāyana and Janamejaya there is the dialogue between Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Sañjaya; and within the dialogue between Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Sañjaya there is the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna.

‡ Sañjaya was born of Gavalgaṇa. He possessed knowledge and righteousness like sages. He was Dhṛtarāṣṭra's minister. (Mahābhārata, Ādi. 63/97)

Comment:

'Dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre'—In Kurukṣetra the gods performed holy sacrifice. King Kuru also performed penance there. Thus being saturated with a spiritual atmosphere, the field of Kurukṣetra has been called the field of righteousness (Dharmakṣetra).

Here by the word 'Kṣetra' in 'Dharmakṣetra' and 'Kurukṣetra' Dhṛtarāṣṭra means to say that this is the land of the Kurus. This is not merely the battle-field but the land of pilgrimage in which human beings by performing holy actions can attain benediction in this life. Therefore, by consulting the noble persons, this land has been chosen for both mundane and ultra mundane benefits.

In this world generally there are three root causes of disputes viz., land, wealth and woman. Out of these three the kings primarily fight for land. Hence there is the significance of the name 'Kurukṣetra' here. In the Kuru-family the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra as well as those of Pāṇḍu are included. Therefore both of them have an equal claim over the land of Kuru. But the Kauravas refuse to give the Pāṇḍavas their share of land. So the war between them becomes inevitable.

Though the word 'Kurukṣetra' is reasonable and justified because the land belongs to both the cousin groups, yet the Indian culture is so unique that righteousness is given the top priority in it. Therefore even an action such as war is performed on the field of righteousness—the land of pilgrimage so that the warriors may attain salvation. Therefore here the word 'Dharmakṣetra' has been used along with 'Kurukṣetra.'

There is one more point which needs attention. In the first verse of the first chapter of the Gītā the first word is 'Dharma' and in the last verse of the eighteenth chapter the last word is 'Mama'. Therefore if 'Dhar' is taken from the first word and 'Ma' is taken from the last word, the word becomes 'Dharma' (righteousness). Therefore, the whole of the Gītā comes within righteousness viz., by following the path of righteousness, the principles of the Gītā are followed and by discharging one's duty according to the doctrines of the Gītā, the path of righteousness is followed.

From these words 'dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre' all of us should learn that all actions should be performed by following the path of righteousness. Every action should be performed not with a selfish motive but for the welfare of all, and the scriptures should be the authority in determining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done (Gītā 16/24).

'Samavetā yuyutsavaḥ'—Duryodhana did not accept the peace negotiations despite repeated proposals from kings. Nay, when Lord Kṛṣṇa came to intervene as a mediator, Duryodhana bluntly refused to part with even as much land as could be covered by the point of a needle without waging a war (Mahābhārata Udyoga. 127/25). Thus Pāṇḍavas had no alternative but to fight. Thus the two groups assembled to fight.

Though the two groups assembled to fight yet Duryodhana had a keener desire for war in order to usurp the kingdom by fair means or foul, just means or unjust viz., by hook or crook. Thus his side was very much willing to wage a war.

The Pāṇḍavas had the virtue of righteousness on their side. For the sake of justice they were prepared to face any hardship. Knowing the deadly consequences of a war Yudhiṣṭhira did not want to indulge in it. But as by obeying their mother the five Pāṇḍavas had married Draupadī, Yudhiṣṭhira by obeying his mother became willing to fight.* Thus Duryodhana and the members of his group were eager to fight for usurping the kingdom, while the Pāṇḍavas were compelled to fight for righteousness.

'Māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāścaiva'— The Pāṇḍavas regarded Dhṛtarāṣṭra (being the elder brother of their father) as their father and

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* Kuntī the mother of the five Pāṇḍavas was very forbearing. She had a unique personality. She did not desire worldly pleasures and kingdom. She asked Lord Kṛṣṇa to grant her the boon of adversity. But there were two things which always pinched her. The first of them was that villains such as Duryodhana etc., wanted to make her beloved daughter-in-law naked in the assembly. This insulting, hateful and in human behaviour pained her very much.

obeyed his order whether it was just or unjust. Therefore here the word 'Māmakāḥ' includes both the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas *. But the word 'Pāṇḍava' has been mentioned separately because Dhṛtarāṣṭra was not fair and just to the Pāṇḍavas. He was not impartial, he had partiality † for his sons. So the word 'Māmakāḥ' has been used for his sons, while 'Pāṇḍava' has been used for the sons of Pāṇḍu. Thus his emotions find expression in his speech. It was because of his partial attitude that he had to suffer torture of destruction of his family. Therefore every human being should learn a lesson that he should not be partial to the members of his house, street, village, province, country and sect because partiality leads to conflict rather than love and good-will.

The term 'Eva' (also) with the term 'Pāṇḍavāḥ' has been used to point out the fact that the Pāṇḍavas should not have waged war because they were righteous to the core. But they also came to the battle-field to wage war. So what did they do there?

['Māmakāḥ' and 'Pāṇḍavāḥ'‡— Sañjaya will explain the word 'māmakāḥ' from the second to the thirteenth verses to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Seeing the army of the Pāṇḍavas, his son Duryodhana told Droṇācārya the names of the chief generals of the Pāṇḍava-army in order to cause hatred in his mind against the Pāṇḍavas. After that Duryodhana naming the principal warriors of his army praised their skill in warfare. In order to please and cheer up Duryodhana, Bhīṣma blew his conch loudly. Hearing the sound of his conch, conchs and trumpets etc., of the Kaurava-army blared forth. Then from the kourteenth to the nineteenth verses Sañjaya will explain the word 'Pāṇḍavāḥ' as was asked by Dhṛtarāṣṭra. He will say Kṛṣṇa, a supporter of the Pāṇḍavas, seated in a chariot blew his conch. After him Arjuna, Bhīma, Yudhiṣṭhira, Nakula and Sahadeva etc., also blew their conchs. The terrible sound of those conchs rent the hearts of the army of Duryodhana. After that Sañjaya while talking about the Pāṇḍavas will start the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna from the twentieth verse.]

'Kimakurvata'—'Kim' has three meanings— doubt, reproach (blame) and question.

The incident of the war cannot be doubted because after ten days of fighting when Bhīṣma fell off the chariot, Sañjaya conveyed the message to Dhṛtarāṣṭra at Hastināpura.

There cannot be reproach (blame) also because Dhṛtarāṣṭra did not blame his sons and the Pāṇḍavas for the war, when the war was already going on.

Therefore here 'Kim' means question. Dhṛtarāṣṭra questions Sañjaya to relate him all the incidents in details in sequence so that he may know them properly.

Link:–Then Sañjaya answers his question:—

सञ्जय उवाच

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।
आचार्यमुपसङ्गम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ २ ॥

Secondly when Lord Kṛṣṇa on behalf of the Pāṇḍavas went to Hastināpura with a proposal of conciliation, Duryodhana, Duḥśāsana, Karṇa and Śakuni etc., wanted to arrest Him. Hearing this incident Kuntī thought that those villians should be killed, otherwise their increasing sins would lead them to damnation. It was because of these two factors that Kuntī ordered her sons, the Pāṇḍavas to fight.

* Though the term 'Kaurava' includes both Duryodhana etc., the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra as well as Yudhiṣṭhira etc., the sons of Pāṇḍu, yet in this verse Dhṛtarāṣṭra has used the term 'Pāṇḍava' for Yudhiṣṭhira etc. So the term 'Kaurava' stands for Duryodhana etc.

† Dhṛtarāṣṭra had a partial outlook because he thought that Duryodhana etc., were his sons while Yudhiṣṭhira etc., were Pāṇḍu's sons. So he never checked Duryodhana from committing evil deeds such as poisoning Bhīma and throwing him into the water, trying to burn the Pāṇḍavas alive in the house made of lac, gambling with Yudhiṣṭhira by foul means, sending an army to the forest to destroy the Pāṇḍavas and so on. The reason was that Dhṛtarāṣṭra had the feeling that somehow or the other if the Pāṇḍavas were killed, his sons would rule over the whole empire.

‡ Describing 'Māmakāḥ' and 'Pāṇḍavāḥ' separately Sañjaya uses the words 'Duryodhana' (1/2) and 'Pāṇḍavāḥ' (1/14).

sañjaya uvāca
dṛṣṭvā tu pāṇḍavānīkaṁ vyūḍhaṁ duryodhanastadā
ācāryamupasaṅgamya rājā vacanamabravīt

Sañjaya said

At that time seeing the army of the Pāṇḍavas arrayed properly, approaching Droṇācārya, prince Duryodhana spoke these words. 2

Comment:

'Tadā'—'Tadā' means the time when both the armies were arrayed and Dhṛtarāṣṭra was very much anxious to hear the account of the battle-field.

'Tu'—Dhṛtarāṣṭra put the question about his sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu. So Sañjaya uses the word 'Tu' to tell Dhṛtarāṣṭra first about his sons.

'Dṛṣṭvā* pāṇḍavānīkaṁ vyūḍham'—It means that the army of the Pāṇḍavas was arrayed properly viz., the warriors had no difference in their opinion †. Righteousness and Lord Kṛṣṇa were in their favour. Therefore the Pāṇḍavas, though fewer in number, had greater influence. Seeing their army arrayed properly, Duryodhana was also influenced. So he approaching Droṇācārya spoke prudential and serious words.

'Rājā Duryodhanaḥ'—Duryodhana was called 'Rājā', the king, because Dhṛtarāṣṭra had greatest attachment and affection for Duryodhana. Moreover Duryodhana was the prince. He looked after the affairs of the empire while Dhṛtarāṣṭra was only the nominal head of the empire. Duryodhana was the main cause of the warfare also. It was because of all these factors that he was called king by Sañjaya.

'Ācāryamupasaṅgamya'—It seems that there were three reasons why Duryodhana approached Droṇācārya:—

(i) He went for his selfish interest so that he could arouse ill-will in Droṇācārya's heart against the Pāṇḍavas and Droṇācārya might be specially partial to his army.

(ii) It was proper on his part to go to Droṇācārya to express his regard for him, because he was his preceptor.

(iii) It is very significant for the chief warrior not to leave his position otherwise the whole order of the army is disturbed. So it was proper on the part of Duryodhana to go to Droṇācārya.

Here a question may be raised that Duryodhana should have first of all approached Bhīṣma because Bhīṣma was the commander supreme. Then why did he approach Droṇācārya? The answer is that Droṇa and Bhīṣma both loved the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas, but Droṇa had special kindness and love for Arjuna. Moreover Duryodhana had pupil-preceptor relationship with Droṇa but he had no family relationship with him. Therefore it was proper on his part to go to Droṇa in order to please him. In practical life also it is seen that a man for his selfish interest tries to please the person who is not closely related to him by giving him regard.

Duryodhana thought that Bhīṣma was his grandfather. So it was easy to please him even if he was displeased, because of his family relationship. So Bhīṣma also loved him very much. Bhīṣma blew his conch loudly in order to please and cheer up Duryodhana (1/12).

'Vacanamabravīt'—Here it was sufficient to use the word 'Abravīt' (spoke) which also includes 'Vacanam' (words). So there was no need to use the word 'Vacanam'. Even then the term 'Vacanam' has been used which shows that Duryodhana spoke prudential and meaningful words in order to arouse

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* In this chapter the term 'Dṛṣṭvā' has been used three times—seeing the Pāṇḍava-army, Duryodhana approaches Droṇācārya (1/2); seeing the Kaurava-army Arjuna lifts his bow (1/20); seeing his kith and kin Arjuna is filled with extreme passion (1/28). In the first two cases the term 'Dṛṣṭvā' has been used for seeing the army while the third time it has been used for seeing the kith and kin which changes Arjuna's feeling.

† There was a difference of opinions in the Kaurava-army because Duryodhana and Duḥśāsana etc., wanted to wage the war. But Bhīṣma, Droṇa and Vikarṇa did not want. And there is a rule that where there is difference in opinions, there vigour subsides.

ill-will in Droṇācārya's heart against the Pāṇḍavas and to win his favour so that he could fight whole-heartedly on the Kauravas side and they could get victory. Thus the term 'Vacanam' was used with a selfish motive.

Link:–Duryodhana approaching Droṇa speaks the following words:—

पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम्।
व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥ ३ ॥

paśyaitāṁ pāṇḍuputrāṇāmācārya mahatīṁ camūm
vyūḍhāṁ drupadaputreṇa tava śiṣyeṇa dhīmatā

Behold, O Master, this mighty army of the sons of Pāṇḍu arrayed for battle by your talented pupil Dhṛṣṭadyumna, the son of Drupada. 3

Comment:

'Ācārya'—By addressing Droṇa as 'Ācārya' it seems that Duryodhana means to say that he is the preceptor who taught the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas the science of warfare. So he should not be partial to either of the groups.

'Tava śiṣyeṇa dhīmatā'—By this phrase Duryodhana means that Droṇa is so simple hearted that he has taught the science of warfare to Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Drupada's son who is born to kill him (Droṇa) and who is so clever that he is determined to vanquish and kill none other than his own preceptor.

'Drupadaputreṇa'—It means that Drupada, with the motive of getting you killed, got a holy sacrifice performed by the two Brāhmaṇas (men of the priest-class) named Yāja and Upayāja and thus Dhṛṣṭadyumna was born. The same Dhṛṣṭadyumna was standing before him as commander of the rival army.

Though Duryodhana could speak the word Dhṛṣṭadyumna instead of 'Drupadaputra', the son of Drupada, yet he intentionally used 'Drupadaputreṇa' to remind Droṇācārya of the enmity that Drupada had with him. So he meant that it was a good opportunity to take revenge.

'Pāṇḍuputrāṇām, etāṁ vyūḍhāṁ mahatīṁ camūṁ paśya' —Behold the mighty army of the Pāṇḍavas arrayed for battle by the son of Drupada. It means that Duryodhana wants to say, "O master, the Pāṇḍavas, whom you love, have made the son of Drupada the general of their army so that he may kill you. Had they loved you, they would never have appointed him general."

Though the army of the Kauravas was larger than that of the Pāṇḍavas because the army of the Kauravas was eleven 'Akṣauhiṇī'* while that of the Pāṇḍavas was only seven 'Akṣauhiṇī', yet the army of the Pāṇḍavas seemed to Duryodhana larger than what it actually was. The army of the Pāṇḍavas seemed more formidable to Duryodhana because:–

(i) It was arrayed in such a manner that even a small army seemed larger to Duryodhana.

(ii) All the warriors of the Pāṇḍavas army were united and of one mind. So it seemed larger in strength and enthusiasm.

Drawing Droṇa's attention to the army of the Pāṇḍavas, Duryodhana wants to say to Droṇācārya that he should not regard the army of the rival group as common and small. He should fight carefully with all his might and it was not difficult for him to defeat the son of Drupada because he was his pupil.

'Etāṁ paśya' means that the army of the Pāṇḍavas is arrayed for the battle. So you should take a quick decision how to get victory over their army.

Link:–After requesting Droṇācārya to behold the army of the Pāṇḍavas, now Duryodhana shows him the chariot-warriors of the army of the Pāṇḍavas.

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* One 'Akṣauhiṇī' army consists of 21,870 chariots, 21,870 elephants, 65,610 horses and 1,09,350 foot-soldiers. (Mahābhārata, Ādi.2/23–26)

अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि ।
युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः ॥ ४ ॥
धृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशिराजश्च वीर्यवान् ।
पुरुजित्कुन्तिभोजश्च शैब्यश्च नरपुङ्गवः ॥ ५ ॥
युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान् ।
सौभद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथाः ॥ ६ ॥

atra śūrā maheṣvāsā bhīmārjunasamā yudhi
yuyudhāno virāṭaśca drupadaśca mahārathaḥ
dhṛṣṭaketuścekitānaḥ kāśirājaśca vīryavān
purujitkuntibhojaśca śaibyaśca narapuṅgavaḥ
yudhāmanyuśca vikrānta uttamaujāśca vīryavān
saubhadro draupadeyāśca sarva eva mahārathāḥ

There (in the army of the Pāṇḍavas) are mighty archers, peers in warfare to heroic Arjuna and Bhīma, such as Sātyaki and Virāṭa and the great chariot-warrior Drupada. Dhṛṣṭaketu, Cekitāna, the valiant king of Kāśī, Purujit, Kuntibhoja and Śaibya, the best of men are also there. Mighty Yudhāmanyu, valiant Uttamaujā, Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadrā and the five sons of Draupadī are also there. All of them are great chariot-warriors. 4-6

Comment:

'Atra śūrā maheṣvāsā bhīmārjuna samā yudhi'—Those who possess big bows and shoot with bows and arrows are called 'Maheṣvāsā' (the mighty archers). They are very valiant and extraordinary warriors. In warfare they are as strong as Bhīma and in the use of weapons and missiles such as bows and arrows etc., as expert as Arjuna.

'Yuyudhānaḥ'—Yuyudhāna (Sātyaki) learnt the science of warfare from Arjuna. Thus he was so obliged to him that he did not go to the side of Duryodhana, even though Lord Kṛṣṇa had given Duryodhana his Nārāyaṇī army. In order to arouse malice in the mind of Droṇācārya, Duryodhana first of all mentions the name of Yuyudhāna, the disciple to Arjuna. He means to say, "You have taught Arjuna archery and granted him the boon that you would try that he would be a matchless archer in this world (Mahābhārata Ādi·131/27). Thus you have so much love for him. But he is so ungrateful that he is arrayed in the army against you while Arjuna's disciple Yuyudhāna is arrayed on his side."

[Yuyudhāna was not killed in the warfare but in the mutual fight among the Yādavas.]

'Virāṭaśca'—Duryodhana says, "It was Virāṭa who was responsible for the insult of warrior Suśarmā. Again it was because of him that you became unconscious with the Sammohana (Beguiling) weapon and we had to flee from the battle-field leaving his cows. The same king Virāṭa is opposing you."

Droṇācārya had no enmity or malice with king Virāṭa. But Duryodhana thinks that if he names Drupada after Yuyudhāna, Droṇācārya may think that Duryodhana is instigating him to fight against the Pāṇḍavas and he is arousing the feeling of enmity with them. So Duryodhana names Virāṭa before Drupada so that Droṇācārya may not see through his trick and may fight bravely.

[King Virāṭa and his three sons named Uttara, Śveta, Śaṅkha were killed in the war of Mahābhārata.]

'Drupadaśca mahārathaḥ—

Duryodhana says, "You reminded Drupada of your old friendship but he insulted you in the assembly saying that he was a king and you a beggar and thus there was no question of any friendship between him and you and caused a son to be born to him who would kill you. The same great chariot-warrior named Drupada is arrayed to fight against you."

[King Drupada was killed in the warfare by Droṇācārya.]

'Dhṛṣṭaketuḥ'—How foolish this Dhṛṣṭaketu is that he is fighting on the side of Śrī Kṛṣṇa who killed his father Śiśupāla with the disc in the assembly.

[Dhṛṣṭaketu was killed by Droṇācārya.]

'Cekitānaḥ' —The entire yādava-army is ready to fight on our side but that solitary yādava is fighting on the side of Pāṇḍavas.

[Cekitāna was killed by Duryodhana.]

'Kāśirājaśca vīryavān'—This king of Kāśī is very valiant and is a great chariot-warrior and is fighting on the side of the Pāṇḍavas, so be careful as you have a very formidable foe to deal with.

[The king of Kāśī was killed in the battle of Mahābhārata.]

'Purujitkuntibhojaśca'—Though both Purujit and Kuntibhoja, being Kuntī's brothers are maternal uncles to us and the Pāṇḍavas, yet being partial they are arrayed to fight against us.

[Purujit and Kuntibhoja—both were killed at the hands of Droṇācārya.]

'Śaibyaśca narapuṅgavaḥ'— Śaibya is the father-in-law to Yudhiṣṭhira. He is noble and very strong. He is our relative but he is also on the side of the Pāṇḍavas.

Yudhāmanyuśca vikrānta uttamaujāśca vīryavān'—Yudhāmanyu and Uttamaujā who are very strong and valiant warriors of Pāñcāla country have been assigned the task of protecting the wheels of my enemy Arjuna's chariot. So keep an eye on them.

[Yudhāmanyu and Uttamaujā were slain in their sleep by Aśvatthāmā.]

'Saubhadraḥ'—He is Abhimanyu, the son to Kṛṣṇa's sister named Subhadrā. He is very brave. He learnt the art of piercing an array of soldiers standing in the form of a circle while he was in his mother's womb. So beware of him.

[Abhimanyu was killed by Duḥśāsana's son when he unjustly hit him with a mace on the head.]

'Draupadeyāśca'—Draupadī gave birth to five sons named Prativindhya, Sutasoma, Śrutakarma, Śatānīka and Śrutasena respectively from Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva. Watch her five sons carefully. She openly insulted me in the assembly. So avenge that insult by killing her five sons.

[Aśvatthāmā killed the five sons while they were asleep at night.]

'Sarva eva mahārathāḥ'—All of them are great chariot-warriors. They are well versed in the scriptures and in the use of arms (A great chariot-warrior is one who can conduct ten thousand archers). There is a large number of such great chariot-warriors in the army of the Pāṇḍavas.

Link:–Duryodhana described valour, bravery and skill of the army of the Pāṇḍavas in warfare so that hatred might be aroused in Droṇācārya against the Pāṇḍavas and he might be full of greater zeal. But then a second thought came to his mind that Droṇa was at heart partial to the Pāṇḍavas. So he might make a peace-treaty with the Pāṇḍavas. As soon as this thought came to his mind, he described the heroes of his side who were very well trained in warfare, in the next three verses.

अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये तान्निबोध द्विजोत्तम ।
नायका मम सैन्यस्य संज्ञार्थं तान्ब्रवीमि ते ॥ ७ ॥

asmākaṁ tu viśiṣṭā ye tānnibodha dvijottama
nāyakā mama sainyasya saṁjñārthaṁ tānbravīmi te

O best of the twice-born (Brāhmaṇa), know the principal warriors, the generals of my army also; I name them for your information. 7

Comment:

'Asmākaṁ tu viśiṣṭā ye tānnibodha dvijottama'—Duryodhana says to Droṇācārya, "O best of the twice-born, you should also know that in our army also there are great chariot-warriors who are in no way less valiant and less trained in warfare, rather they are more valiant and better trained in warfare."

In the third verse 'Paśya' and here Nibodha' verbs are used because the army of the Pāṇḍavas is standing in front of them, therefore Duryodhana uses the verb 'Paśya' (Behold). But the army of the Kauravas is not in front of Droṇācārya, it is on the side of his back. So Duryodhana uses the verb 'Nibodha' (Know).

'Nāyakā mama sainyasya saṁjñārthaṁ tānbravīmi te'—I am mentioning the names of the chief generals, marshals and great chariot-warriors of my army to draw your attention to them.

'Saṁjñārtham' means that there are innumerable generals who cannot be named easily. Therefore I am just drawing your attention as you know all of them.

In this verse Duryodhana probably wants to say that his side is in no way weaker than that of the Pāṇḍavas, but is rather stronger, yet according to politics, however weak the army of the enemy may be, it should not be regarded as weak. Therefore, they should not have in the least the feeling of neglect and indifference towards the enemy. So he has already described the warriors of the other side to make him careful and now he is telling the names of the warriors of his army.

Secondly after seeing the army of the Pāṇḍavas compact and well disciplined, he was influenced and also a bit afraid. The reason was that in spite of being small there were several righteous persons, and also Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself was there in that army. The righteous persons and God leave their influence on all the creatures including those having the most sinful conduct and even on animals, birds, trees and plants. The reason is that God and righteousness are eternal, while all the temporal powers are transient. Therefore Duryodhana is also influenced by the army of the Pāṇḍavas. But depending on the material and temporal power he wants to assure Droṇācārya that their army is superior to that of the Pāṇḍavas. Therefore they can easily gain a victory over the army of the Pāṇḍavas

भवान्भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कृपश्च समितिंजयः ।
अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिस्तथैव च ॥ ८ ॥

bhavānbhīṣmaśca karṇaśca kṛpaśca samitiñjayaḥ
aśvatthāmā vikarṇaśca saumadattistathaiva ca

Yourself, Bhīṣma, Karṇa and Kṛpa who is ever victorious in battle; and Aśvatthāmā, Vikarṇa and Saumadatti (Bhūriśravā), the son of Somadatta. 8

Comment:

'Bhavānbhīṣmaśca'—You and Bhīṣma both are unique. So if you fight applying your full vigour, neither the gods, nor genies, nor devils nor men can encounter you. Both of you are famous for your valour throughout the world. Bhīṣma has been a celibate since birth and he can't be killed without his own will.

[In the war of Mahābhārata Droṇācārya was killed by Dhṛṣṭadyumna while Bhīṣma died on summer solstice of his own free will.]

'Karṇśca'—Karṇa is very brave. I believe that he by himself can gain a victory over the army of the Pāṇḍavas. Even Arjuna is no match for him. Such a valiant warrior is standing on our side.

[Karṇa was killed by Arjuna in the war of

Mahābhārata.]

'Kṛpaśca samitiñjayaḥ'—Kṛpa is immortal*. He is our well-wisher and can gain a victory over the whole army of the Pāṇḍavas. Though Duryodhana after mentioning the names of Droṇācārya and Bhīṣma should have named Kṛpācārya. Yet Duryodhana had more faith in Karṇa than in Kṛpācārya. So Karṇa's name was spontaneously uttered by him. But he wanted to please Droṇācārya and Bhīṣma by calling Kṛpācārya ever victorious in battle lest they should regard it as an insult to Kṛpācārya.

'Aśvatthāmā'—He is also immortal. Being your son he is very valiant. He is well versed in the science of warfare because he has learnt it from you.

'Vikarṇaśca saumadattistathaiva ca'—You should not think that only the Pāṇḍavas are righteous. On our side my brother Vikarṇa is also very righteous and brave. Similarly Bhūriśravā, the grandson of our great grandfather's brother Bāhlīka and the son of Somadatta is also very righteous. He has also performed several holy sacrifices by offering great gifts. He is also a very brave and great chariot-warrior.

[In the warfare Vikarṇa was killed by Bhīma and Bhūriśravā was killed by Sātyaki.]

Here by mentioning these names Duryodhana means to say, "O preceptor (Ācārya), in our army there are so many valiant warriors such as you, Bhīṣma, Karṇa, Kṛpācārya etc., while in the army of the Pāṇḍavas such valiant warriors are not seen. In our army two great warriors named Kṛpācārya and Aśvatthāmā are immortal while in the army of the Pāṇḍavas there is none. Moreover in our army there is no scarcity of righteous persons. Therefore we need not be afraid of them.

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अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः ।
नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः ॥ ९ ॥

anye ca bahavaḥ śūrā madarthe tyaktajīvitāḥ
nānāśastrapraharaṇāḥ sarve yuddhaviśāradāḥ

And there are many other heroes well trained in warfare, who, equipped with various weapons and missiles, have staked their lives for my sake. 9

Comment:

'Anye ca bahavaḥ śūrā madarthe tyaktajīvitaḥ'—Besides the above mentioned heroes, there are many great chariot-warriors such as Bāhlīka, Śalya, Bhagadatta, Jayadratha etc., in our army who have come here to fight by staking their lives for me. They may be killed in the war but they will not leave the battle-field. How should I express my hearty thankfulness to them before you?

'Nānāśastrapraharaṇāḥ sarve yuddhaviśāradāḥ'—All these heroes are expert in the use of weapons such as swords, maces, tridents and missiles such as arrows and javelins etc. They are in every way expert in the science of warfare.

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Link:—When Duryodhana could not trick Droṇācārya, he had a second thought. This thought is described by Sañjaya in the next verse.†

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।
पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ॥ १० ॥

aparyāptaṁ tadasmākaṁ balaṁ bhīṣmābhirakṣitam
paryāptaṁ tvidameteṣāṁ balaṁ bhīmābhirakṣitam

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* Aśvatthāmā, Bali, Vedavyāsa, Hanumān, Vibhīṣaṇa, Kṛpa (Kṛpācārya), Paraśurāma and Mārkaṇḍeya—these eight are immortal. In the scripture it is written.

† Sañjaya by means of the divine insight he was endowed with by Sage Vyāsa, was able to know even the minds of the warriors:— (Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma. 2/11)

Our army is meagre and easy to conquer because it is guarded by Bhīṣma (a well-wisher of both the armies). But their army marshalled by Bhīma is unconquerable (because Bhīma is partial only to his own army). 10

Comment:

'Aparyāptaṁ tadasmākaṁ balaṁ bhīṣmābhirakṣitam'— Duryodhana thinks about his army "Our army is though larger than that of the Pāṇḍavas is easy to be conquered because our army is unwieldy, indisciplined, disunited and faint-hearted while the army of the Pāṇḍavas is compact, disciplined, united and fearless. The chief protector of our army is Bhīṣma who is friendly to both the armies. He is a great devotee to Kṛṣṇa. He in his heart has a great respect for Yudhiṣṭhira and great love for Arjuna. Therefore though outwardly he is on our side, yet at heart he is a well-wisher of the Pāṇḍavas. He is the field-marshal of our army. Under these circumstances how can our army gain a victory over the Pāṇḍavas?

'Paryāptaṁ tvidameteṣāṁ balaṁ bhīmābhirakṣitam'—But this army of the Pāṇḍavas can gain a victory over our army very easily because all the warriors of their army are united without having any difference of opinions. The protector of their army is Bhīma who is brave and who has always defeated me since childhood. He has taken a pledge to kill all the hundred brothers including me, he is bent on destroying us. His body is as strong as adamant. I poisoned him but it did not kill him. Having such a protector as Bhīma, the army of the Pāṇḍavas is certainly capable of gaining a victory over our army.

Here a doubt may arise that Duryodhana named Bhīṣma who was their field-marshal in defence of their army, but he named Bhīma who was not a field-marshal in defence of the army of the Pāṇḍavas. The answer is that at that time Duryodhana was not thinking about the field-marshals but about the power of the two armies. Duryodhana was very much influenced by Bhīma's power, so he named Bhīma as the protector of the army of the Pāṇḍavas.

An Important Fact

Arjuna, beholding the army of the Kauravas raises up his bow (Gītā 1/20), while Duryodhana, beholding the army of the Pāṇḍavas approaches Droṇācārya and requests him to behold the army of the Pāṇḍavas arrayed for battle. It proves that Duryodhana has been horror-struck*. Though he is horror-struck, yet with his trick he wants to please Droṇācārya and instigate him against the Pāṇḍavas. The reason is that in Duryodhana's heart there are unrighteousness, injustice and sin and it is a rule that an unrighteous, unjust and sinful person can't live happily and peacefully. On the other hand in Arjuna's heart there are righteousness and justice. So he does not play any trick and have any fear to serve his selfish interest. He is fearless, courageous and brave. That is why he orders Lord Kṛṣṇa, "O Kṛṣṇa, place my chariot between the two armies" (1/21). It means that the person who depends on perishable riches and property etc., and whose heart is full of unrighteousness, injustice and ill-feelings, doesn't possess real power. He is hollow from within and is never fearless. On the other hand one who depends on God and follows righteousness is never horror-struck. His power is real and he always remains free from cares and fears. Therefore, the strivers who aspire for God-Realization should perform their duty by depending only on God, and for His sake by renouncing unrighteousness and injustice etc. They should never follow the path of unrighteousness by attaching importance to material prosperity and contact-born pleasures because these two lead men to damnation.

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* When the conchs of the army of the Kauravas blared forth, their sound had no effect on the army of the Pāṇḍavas. But when the conchs of the army of the Pāṇḍavas blared forth, their sound rent the hearts of Duryodhana etc. (1/13,19).

It proves that by following the path of injustice and unrighteousness the hearts of Duryodhana etc., had become weak and horror-struck.

Link:–Now Duryodhana gives instruction to all the great chariot-warriors of his army to please Bhīṣma and says:–

अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः ।
भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्व एव हि ॥ ११ ॥

ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu yathābhāgamavasthitāḥ
bhīṣmamevābhirakṣantu bhavantaḥ sarva eva hi

Now all of you, stationed in your respective positions on all fronts, guard Bhīṣma in particular, by all means. 11

Comment:

'Ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu yathābhāgamavasthitāḥ bhīṣmamevābhirakṣantu bhavantaḥ sarva eva hi'—All of you (warriors) stationed in your respective positions on different fronts, should guard Bhīṣma by all means.

By saying the above words Duryodhana wants to please Bhīṣma so that he may be partial to his army. Secondly he gives the instruction to the warriors of his army to see that Śikhaṇḍī should not come before Bhīṣma. If Śikhaṇḍī comes before Bhīṣma, the later will not use his arms and weapons on him because he was a woman in the previous birth and in that birth also first he was a woman and later he was changed into a man. So Bhīṣma by regarding him as a woman has promised not to fight with Śikhaṇḍī. Śikhaṇḍī has taken birth by Lord Śiva's boon to kill Bhīṣma. Therefore if Bhīṣma is protected from Śikhaṇḍī, he will kill all the other warriors of the army of the Pāṇḍavas and their victory is certain. Therefore Duryodhana gives instruction to all the great chariot-warriors of his army to guard Bhīṣma.

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Link:–Finding Duryodhana discouraged by getting no encouraging response from Droṇācārya, Bhīṣma in order to express his affection for him, cheers him up. This is expressed by Sañjaya in the next verse.

तस्य संजनयन्हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।
सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥ १२ ॥

tasya saṁjanayanharṣaṁ kuruvṛddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ
siṁhanādaṁ vinadyoccaiḥ śaṅkhaṁ dadhmau pratāpavān

The grand old man of the Kaurava race, their glorious grand uncle Bhīṣma, cheering up Duryodhana roared terribly like a lion and blew his conch. 12

Comment:

'Tasya saṁjanayanharṣam'—Here it should have been said that Bhīṣma blew his conch and it cheered up Duryodhana. But here it has been said that Bhīṣma, cheering up Duryodhana blew his conch. Sañjaya wants to express that the very action of blowing the conch will certainly cheer up Duryodhana. To express this influence of Bhīṣma, Sañjaya uses the adjective 'Pratāpavān' (Glorious).

'Kuruvṛddhaḥ'—Though in the Kuru race Bāhlīka (the younger brother of Bhīṣma's father Śāntanu) was older than Bhīṣma, yet Bhīṣma possessed better knowlege of righteousness and God than all the other old members in the race. So Sañjaya calls him 'Kuruvṛddhaḥ' (the grand old man of the Kaurava race).

'Pratāpavān'—Bhīṣma was well-known for his renunciation of wealth and woman i.e., he did not accept the kingdom nor did he marry. He was well versed in military science and the scriptures. So people were very much influenced by him.

When Bhīṣma was carrying off all by himself the daughters of the king of Kāśī from the place where the suitors had assembled to marry them, the suitors of the warrior class attacked him but he defeated alone all of them. He was so well versed in the science of weapons and warfare that he did not accept his defeat even before his preceptor Paraśurāma who had taught him the science of weapons etc. Thus he had great influence over the Kṣatriyas (warrior class) because of his skill in military science.

When Bhīṣma was lying on the arrow bed, Lord Kṛṣṇa said to Yudhiṣṭhira, "If you want to put any question on righteousness (Dharma), ask him now because the sun of knowledge of the scriptures is going to set, i.e., Bhīṣma, a great scholar of the scriptures is going to die."* Thus we see that he had great mastery over the scriptures and others were very much influenced by his knowledge.

'Pitāmahaḥ'—This word seems to mean that Droṇācārya did not give any importance to the tricks played by Duryodhana. He understood that Duryodhana wanted to trick him. So he remained silent. But Bhīṣma is the grand uncle of Duryodhana. So he sees Duryodhana's child-like behaviour in his tricks. Hence Bhīṣma unlike Droṇācārya breaks his silence and blows his conch to cheer up Duryodhana and show his affection for him.

'Siṁhanādaṁ vinadyoccaiḥ śaṅkhaṁ dadhmau'— When a lion roars ferociously, huge wild animals like elephants etc., get horror-struck. Similarly by roaring ferociously Bhīṣma blew his conch in order to cheer up Duryodhana and horrify the warriors of the hostile army.

Link:–In the verse that follows Sañjaya narrates the effect of the sound of the conch blown by Bhīṣma.

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः ।
सहसैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत् ॥ १३ ॥

tataḥ śaṅkhāśca bheryaśca paṇavānakagomukhāḥ
sahasaivābhyahanyanta sa śabdastumulobhavat

Then conchs, kettle-drums, tabors, drums and cow-horns suddenly blared forth and the noise was tumultuous. 13

Comment:

'Tataḥ śaṅkhāśca bheryaśca paṇavānakagomukhāḥ'—Bhīṣma had not blown his conch to declare war, his purpose was to cheer up Duryodhana, but the army of the Kauravas thought that the war was declared. So hearing the sound of the conch, all musical instruments such as conchs etc., of the Kaurava-army suddenly blared forth.

Conchs are found in the sea. They are blown in adoration of God, on auspicious occasions and for declaring war. 'Kettle-drums' (Bherī) are drums with large hollow bowls of iron with tops made of the skin of buffaloes and are beaten with a wooden stick. They are kept in temples and forts and are beaten specially on functions and auspicious occasions. 'Tabors' (Paṇava) are small drums like a tambourine. They are made of iron or wood with tops made of the skin of goats and are beaten with the hand or the wooden stick. Their beating is regarded as auspicious as adoration to Lord Gaṇeśa 'Ānaka' (Drum) is a musical instrument made of clay with the top made of leather and

* Mahābhārata Śānti. 46/23

beaten with the hand. 'Gomukha' (cow- horn) is a musical wind instrument consisting of a long metal tube usually bent like a serpent having a cow shaped mouth and is blown with the mouth.

'Sahasaivābhyahanyanta*'— The Kaurava-army was full of great enthusiasm. Therefore as soon as Bhīṣma blew his conch, all their musical instruments suddenly blared forth all at once without effort.

'Sa śabdastumulo'bhavat'—The sound of the musical instruments such as conch etc., of the Kaurava-army standing in divisions and sub-divisions was tumultuous and there was an echo.

Link:–In the beginning of this chapter Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked Sañjaya, "What did my sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu do, while assembled on the battle- field?" Therefore Sañjaya answered from the second to the thirteenth verses what Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons did. Now in the next verse Sañjaya answers what Pāṇḍu's sons did.

ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।
माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥ १४ ॥

tataḥ śvetairhayairyukte mahati syandane sthitau
mādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaścaiva divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ

Then seated in a glorious chariot drawn by white horses Śrī Kṛṣṇa as well as Arjuna blew their divine conchs. 14

Comment:

'Tataḥ śvetairhayairyukte'—The Gandharva (a celestial musician) named Citraratha gave Arjuna one hundred divine-horses. It was their speciality that they remained one hundred, even though many of them were killed on the battle-field. They could go to heaven or live on the earth. Out of these one hundred horses, four beautiful and well trained horses were harnessed to Arjuna's chariot.

'Mahati syandane sthitau'—Fire-god suffered from indigestion because a lot of 'Ghee' (clarified butter) was offered in holy scarifice to him. Therefore fire-god wanted to cure his indigestion by eating (burning) medicinal herbs of the Khāṇḍava forest. But he was unable to burn it because it was protected by other gods. Whenever he tried to burn it, 'Indra' king of the gods extinguished the fire with the rain-fall. At last with Arjuna's help fire-god cured his indigestion by burning the whole forest and being pleased with Arjuna, fire-god gave him a very big and glorious chariot. As many weapons and missiles as could be accommodated in nine bullock carts were kept in it. It was gilded and glorious. Its wheels were strong and huge. It's flag shone like lightning and it was about a 'Yojana' (eight miles) in length. In spite of being so long it was neither heavy, nor could stop, nor could be entangled in trees etc. Hanumān (the monkey-god who acted as a spy in Rāma's march against Rāvaṇa) was sitting on the flag.

'Sthitau'—'Sthitau' means that the beautiful and glorious chariot became more beautiful and more glorious because Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself and His dear devotee Arjuna were sitting in it.

'Mādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaścaiva'—'Mā' is Lakṣmī, the goddess of wealth and prosperity and 'Dhava' is the husband or owner. Therefore 'Mādhava' means the Lord of Lakṣmī, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu. Here Pāṇḍava, has been used for

* Here instead of saying that the army of the Kauravas blared forth their musical instruments, it has been said that the instruments blared forth. This construction of the sentence shows enthusiasm and ease of the army.

Arjuna because he is the chief among the Pāṇḍavas—'Pāṇḍavānāṁ Dhanañjayaḥ; (Gītā 10/37) [Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "Among the Pāṇḍavas, I am Dhanañjaya (Arjuna)]" (He has been called chief among the Pāṇḍavas because he had no individuality apart from Lord Kṛṣṇa).

Arjuna and Śrī Kṛṣṇa were the incarnations of 'Nara' and 'Nārāyaṇa' respectively. In the beginning of every 'Parva' (section), there is salutation to Nara (Arjuna) and Nārāyaṇa (Lord Kṛṣṇa). Thus from this point of view also Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna both were chiefs. Sañjaya also says in the last verse of the Gītā "Wherever is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Yoga, and wherever is Arjuna, the wielder of the bow (Gāṇḍīva bow), there are prosperity, victory, glory and righteousness; this is my conviction" (18/78).

'Divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ'—Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna loudly blew their conchs which were glorious and divine.

Here it may be stated that it was proper on the part of Bhīṣma to blow his conch first because he was the field-marshal of the Kaurava-army. But how far was it justified on the part of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the chariot-driver of the Pāṇḍava-army to blow the conch when the field-marshal, Dhṛṣṭadyumna of the Pāṇḍava army was there? The answer is that Lord Kṛṣṇa is ever chief whether He works as a chariot-driver or a great chariot-warrior. He is ever great whatever rank He may hold, because He is 'Acyuta' (Fixed), He never deviates from his divine nature. In Pāṇḍava-army Lord Kṛṣṇa was the chief and the director. Even when he was a boy, Nanda and Upnanda etc., obeyed him. Therefore they, by obeying him, started to worship Govardhana, (a mountain) instead of Indra, the king of gods, who had been worshipped for generations. It means that the Lord, in whatever state, place and circumstance He may live, is ever chief. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa was the first in the Pāṇḍava-army to blow his conch.

One who is really inferior, regards himself as superior after getting an appointment to a high post. On the contrary one who is really superior is superior everywhere and he elevates the post on which he works. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa, while working as a chariot-driver elevated that post.

Link:–Now Sañjaya in the next four verses, explaining the previous verse and giving some more details, describes the blowing of conchs by other warriors.

पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनञ्जयः ।
पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥ १५ ॥

pāñcajanyaṁ hṛṣīkeśo devadattaṁ dhanañjayaḥ
pauṇḍraṁ dadhmau mahāśaṅkhaṁ bhīmakarmā vṛkodaraḥ

Hṛṣīkeśa (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) blew his conch named Pāñcajanya, Dhanañjaya (Arjuna), his conch called Devadatta; while Vṛkodara (Bhīma) of terrific deeds blew his mighty conch, Pauṇḍra. 15.

Comment:

'Pāñcajanyaṁ hṛṣīkeśaḥ'–'Hṛṣīkeśa' means the master of mind and the senses. Lord Kṛṣṇa who pervades the internal parts viz., who is acquainted with the hearts of all the people, stationed on the side of the Pāṇḍavas, blew his conch named Pāñcajanya. Lord Kṛṣṇa having killed the demon named Pañcajana who appeared in the form of a conch, accepted him as a conch. So His conch was named as 'Pāñcajanya."

'Devadattaṁ dhanañjayaḥ'—The word 'Dhanañjaya' means conqueror of wealth. At the time of the holy sacrifice named Rājasūya, Arjuna appropriated wealths

of many rulers by gaining victory over them. So Arjuna was called 'Dhanañjaya*. Indra, the king of gods gave Arjuna the conch named Devadatta while he was fighting with demons named Nivātakavaca etc. It produced such a loud and horrifying sound that the army of the enemies became horror-struck. This conch was blown by Arjuna.

'Pauṇḍraṁ dadhmau mahāśaṅkhaṁ bhīmakarmā vṛkodaraḥ'— Bhīma was named 'Bhīmakarmā' (Doer of the terrible deeds) because he killed demons such as Hiḍimbā, Baka and Jaṭa etc., and valiant warriors such as Kīcaka and Jarāsandha etc. In his belly, besides the fire which helps to digest food, there was a special fire named 'Vṛka' which digested a lot of food very easily. It was because of his great digestive power that he was named 'Vṛkodara.' Thus Bhīma who was the doer of the terrific deeds and possessed strong digestive power, blew his mighty conch Pauṇḍra.

अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।
नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ ॥ १६ ॥

anantavijayaṁ rājā kuntīputro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ
nakulaḥ sahadevaśca sughoṣamaṇipuṣpakau

King Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Kuntī blew his conch Anantavijaya; while Nakula and Sahadeva blew their conchs, the Sughoṣa and Maṇipuṣpaka respectively. 16

Comment:

'Anantavijayaṁ rājā kuntīputro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ nakulaḥ sahadevaśca sughoṣamaṇipuṣpakau'— Arjuna, Bhīma and Yudhiṣṭhira—the three were Kuntī's sons while Nakula and Sahadeva were Mādrī's sons. So the adjective 'Kuntīputra' (Kuntī's sons) has been used for Yudhiṣṭhira.

Yudhiṣṭira has been called a king because he was the ruler of half of the Indraprastha kingdom before exile and according to the promise and the law, he should have been a king after living in exile for twelve years and one year's incognito residence. Moreover by calling him a king, Sañjaya wanted to hint that he would be the king of the entire territory afterwards.

काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः ।
धृष्टद्युम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः ॥ १७ ॥
द्रुपदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीपते ।
सौभद्रश्च महाबाहुः शङ्खान्दध्मुः पृथक्पृथक् ॥ १८ ॥

kāśyaśca parameṣvāsaḥ śikhaṇḍī ca mahārathaḥ
dhṛṣṭadyumno virāṭaśca sātyakiścāparājitaḥ
drupado draupadeyāśca sarvaśaḥ pṛthivīpate
saubhadraśca mahābāhuḥ śaṅkhāndadhmuḥ pṛthakpṛthak

The king of Kāśī, the excellent archer and Śikhaṇḍī, the great chariot-warrior, Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Virāṭa, and invincible Sātyaki, king Drupada as well as the five sons of Draupadī, and the mighty-armed Abhimanyu, son of Subhadrā, all of them blew their respective conchs. 17-18

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* Mahabhārata Virāṭa. 44/13

Comment:

'Kāśyaśca parameṣvāsaḥ śikhaṇḍī ca mahārathaḥ dhṛṣṭadyumno virāṭaśca sātyakiścāparājitaḥ drupado draupadeyāś ca sarvaśaḥ pṛthivīpate saubhadraśca mahābāhuḥ śaṅkhāndadhmuḥ pṛthakpṛthak'— The great chariot-warrior Śikhaṇḍī was very brave. He in his previous birth was a woman (the daughter named Ambā of the king of Kāśī) and in this birth also was born as a daughter to king Drupada. Afterwards she became a man by getting virility from a genie named Sthūṇākarṇa. Bhīṣma knew all this and therefore he regarded him as a woman and did not shoot arrows at him. Arjuna while fighting keeping Śikhaṇḍī ahead, shot arrows at Bhīṣma and overthrew him from the chariot.

Arjuna's son Abhimanyu was very brave. In warfare he killed many warriors by entering the array of soldiers stationed in the form of a circle formed by Droṇa. At last six great chariot-warriors of the army of the Kauravas surrounding him by foul means, attacked him with weapons and missiles. He was killed when Duḥśāsana's son hit him on the head with a mace.

Sañjaya mentioned only one warrior named Bhīṣma who blew his conch from the Kaurava-army, while he mentioned eighteen warriors such as Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna, Bhīma etc., from the Pāṇḍava-army. It seems that Sañjaya did not want to describe the unrighteous side of the Kaurava-army in detail. But he had great regard for Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Pāṇḍavas and the Pāṇḍava-army because of their righteousness. So he thought it proper to describe the warriors of the Pāṇḍava-army in more detail and he took delight in describing them.

Link:—In the next verse there is the description of the effect of the sound of the conchs on the Kaurava-army.

स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत्।
नभश्च पृथिवीं चैव तुमुलो व्यनुनादयन्॥ १९॥

sa ghoṣo dhārtarāṣṭrāṇāṁ hṛdayāni vyadārayat
nabhaśca pṛthivīṁ caiva tumulo vyanunādayan

The terrible sound, echoing through the sky and the earth rent the hearts of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons who usurped kingdom by unjust means. 19

Comment:

'Sa ghoṣo dhārtarāṣṭrāṇāṁ hṛdayāni vyadārayat nabhaśca pṛthivīṁ caiva tumulo vyanunādayan'—The peal of the conchs of the Pāṇḍava-army was so thunderous, roaring and horrifying that it echoed through the sky and the earth and rent the hearts of the Kauravas, who usurped the empire, and also of the kings who had come to fight from their side. It means that, as a weapon or a missile rends the heart and causes pain in the heart the sound of the conchs rent their hearts and caused pain in them. That sound discouraged the Kaurava-army and its warriors were horror-struck at the formidable strength of the Pāṇḍava-army.

Sañjaya was relating the incidents to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. So it seems that it was not proper on his part to mention 'Dhārtarāṣṭrāṇām' (Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons). He should have mentioned 'Tāvakīnānām' (his sons and relatives) which would have been courteous. But he used the word correctly because it was justified on his part to use the word as he meant to say that his sons usurped the kingdom. Their hearts were rent because they favoured. Therefore the use of the word is justified.

Here a question may arise why there was no effect of the sound of the musical instruments such as conchs etc., of the eleven Akṣauhiṇī army (In an Akṣauhiṇī army there are 109350 foot soldiers, 65610 horses,

21870 chariots and 21870 elephants) of the Kauravas* on the Pāṇḍava-army, but the sound of the conchs of the seven Akṣauhiṇī army of the Pāṇḍavas rent the hearts of the Kaurava-army. The answer is that the hearts of those who are righteous and just are impregnable. The Pāṇḍavas had ruled over the empire with justice and righteousness before exile and also demanded their empire from the Kauravas which was quite a just demand. On the other hand the hearts of those who are unrighteous, unjust and sinful, are weak, doubtful and full of fear. It is their sin or injustice which weakens their hearts. Duryodhana and his group tried their best to kill the Pāṇḍavas by any means–fair or foul. They usurped their empire and gave them troubles. Thus they stood for unrighteousness. So the sound of the conchs of seven Akṣauhiṇī army of the Pāṇḍavas rent their hearts, their hearts had a piercing pain.

This incident warns a striver that he should never have unjust and unrighteous dealings through his body, speech and mind because they weaken the heart and create fear in it. For example the creatures of the world including the gods and the demons were afraid of Rāvaṇa, the king of Laṅkā. But when he abducted Sītā, he being terrified, saw here and there to know if any one was watching him (Mānasa 3/28/4-5).

Link:–In the first verse Dhṛtarāṣṭra put a question about his sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu. Sañjaya answered the question from the second verse to the nineteenth verse. Now Sañjaya starts the dialogue between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, which is known as 'The Bhagavadgītā' in the next verse.

अथ व्यवस्थितान्दृष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान् कपिध्वजः ।
प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसंपाते धनुरुद्यम्य पाण्डवः ॥ २० ॥
हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह महीपते ।

atha vyavasthitāndṛṣṭvā dhārtarāṣṭrān kapidhvajaḥ
pravṛtte śastraśaṁpāte dhanurudyamya pāṇḍavaḥ
hṛṣīkeśaṁ tadā vākyamidamāha mahīpate

Now, O lord of the earth, seeing Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons arrayed against him and the fighting about to commence with missiles, Pāṇḍava (Arjuna) whose ensign badge is Hanumān, lifting his bow, spoke the following words to Kṛṣṇa. 20

Comment:

'Atha'—This word means that now Sañjaya begins the Bhagavadgītā in the form of the dialogue between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. This dialogue ends with the word 'Iti' used in the seventy-fourth verse of the eighteenth chapter. Similarly the gospel of the Gītā begins with the eleventh verse of the second chapter and ends with sixty-sixth verse of the eighteenth chapter.

'Pravṛtte śastrasampāte'—Though Bhīṣma had blown his conch to cheer up

* It was impossible for Duryodhana to have such a big eleven Akṣauhiṇī army. But when the Pāṇḍavas were exiled, Duryodhana adopted the policy of Yudhiṣṭhira. As Yudhiṣṭira ruled over the subjects with justice and righteousness to give them comfort, thinking it his duty, Duryodhana also did the same to establish his influence over them. It was because of his good behaviour towards the people for thirteen years that the army which liked the Pāṇḍavas, came over to his side. Thus he could win the confidence of nine Akṣauhiṇī army because of his good behaviour. Lord Kṛṣṇa gave him one Akṣauhiṇī army. Moreover he tricked one Akṣauhiṇī army of king Śalya of Madra to his side which had been on the side of the Pāṇḍavas. Therefore on the side of the Kauravas there was an army eleven Akṣauhiṇī in number while on the Pāṇḍava side it was seven Akṣauhiṇī.

Duryodhana, not to declare war, yet the Kaurava-army and the Pāṇḍava-army thought that the war was declared and so they became ready with weapons and missiles in their hands. Seeing them equipped with weapons and missiles, Arjuna also lifted his bow named Gāṇḍīva.

'Vyavasthitān dhārtarāṣṭrān dṛṣṭvā'—By these words Sañjaya means, "When your son Duryodhana saw the army of the Pāṇḍavas, he fled to Droṇācārya. But when Arjuna saw the army of the Kauravas, he lifted his bow." 'Dhanurudyamya' (took his bow)–It shows that Duryodhana was filled with fear while Arjuna was fearless, courageous and valiant at that time.

'Kapidhvajaḥ'—By using this epithet 'Kapidhvajaḥ' Sañjaya wants to remind Dhṛtarāṣṭra of Hanumān sitting on the banner of Arjuna's chariot. When the Pāṇḍavas used to live in the forest, one day suddenly wind-god, dropped a divine lotus having a thousand leaves before Draupadī. She was very much pleased to see it, and she said to Bhīma, "O excellent among the brave, bring me several lotuses of this kind." Bhīma started from there to satisfy her desire. When he reached the Kadalī forest, he happened to meet Hanumān. Both of them talked for some time. At last Hanumān wanted to grant him a boon. Bhīma said, "May your kindness continue to me!" Hanumān said, "O son of wind-god, when becoming uneasy by being injured with arrows and weapons, entering the army of the enemy you make a roar, I'll enhance that roar by adding my own to it. Moreover, by sitting on the banner of Arjuna's chariot I'll make such a roar that it will be deadly terrifying to your enemy and you will gain a victory over them and kill them very easily.* Therefore the victory of those, on whose banner Hanumān was sitting, was certain.

'Pāṇḍavaḥ'— Dhṛtarāṣṭra used the word 'Pāṇḍavāḥ' in his question. Therefore Sañjaya also used the word 'Pāṇḍavaḥ' several times (as in 1/14 and here in 1/20) to remind Dhṛtarāṣṭra of the Pāṇḍavas.

'Hṛṣīkeśaṁ tadā vākyamidamāha mahīpate'—Duryodhana seeing the army of the Pāṇḍavas, approaching his preceptor named Droṇa, spoke the words full of trick; while Arjuna seeing the army of the Kauravas approaching Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is a world-teacher, who is acquainted with the hearts of all, and who is the inspirer of mind and intellect etc., spoke the words full of bravery, courage, and duty.

अर्जुन उवाच

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥ २१ ॥
यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।
कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन्रणसमुद्यमे ॥ २२ ॥

arjuna uvāca

senayorubhayormadhye ratham sthāpaya me'cyuta
yāvadetānnirīkṣe'ham yoddhukāmānavasthitān
kairmayā saha yoddhavyamasminraṇasamudyame

Arjuna said:

O Acyuta, (Acyuta means one who does not deviate from his divine glory) place my chariot between the two armies and keep it there till I have carefully observed these war-minded warriors, with whom I must wage this war. 21-22

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* Mahābhārata Vana. 151/17-18

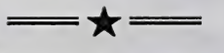
Comment:

'Acyuta senayorubhayormadhye ratham sthāpaya'—The two armies were stationed at such a distance from each other from where they could shoot arrows etc., at each other. Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa to place the chariot in the middle. It was middle in two ways (i) The middle of the breadth of the armies. (ii) The middle of the two armies viz., the distance of the two armies from that point should be the same. His purpose was to see the two armies easily.

'Senayorubhayormadhye' has been used in the Gītā three times–here (in 1/21), in the twenty-fourth verse of this chapter and in the tenth verse of the second chapter. He uses this phrase three times because the first time he orders Kṛṣṇa to place the chariot between the two armies (1/21), then Lord Kṛṣṇa placing the chariot between the two armies asks Arjuna to behold the Kauravas (1/24) and afterwards preaches the gospel to despondent Arjuna right there (2/10). To begin with Arjuna was stout hearted. When he saw his kith and kin in battle array he developed the attitude of indifference being overwhelmed with attachment. Finally Lord Kṛṣṇa preached the gospel of the Gītā which dispelled his attachment. It means that a man in whatever circumstances he is, by making the proper use of those circumstances, can be free from desires and can realize God because God (Paramātmā) always remains uniform in all circumstances.

'Yāvadetānnirīkṣe'ham..... raṇasamudyame'—How long should the chariot be placed between the two armies? Arjuna says, "Keep the chariot there till I have carefully observed those war-minded kings with their armies who are stationed in the army of the Kauravas and with whom I have to wage the war. Let me see the heroes I have to encounter. Let me also see which of them are inferior, superior and equal to me in heroism."

Here by the phrase 'Yoddhukāmān' Arjuna means to say that they sent a proposal of conciliation but the Kauravas did not accept it, because they had a keen desire to wage war. So he wants to observe the warriors and their bravery which makes them so confident to wage a war.



योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।
धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥ २३ ॥

yotsyamānānavekṣe'ham ya ete'tra samāgatāḥ
dhārtarāṣṭrasya durbuddheryuddhe priyacikīrṣavaḥ

I desire to observe evil-minded Duryodhana's well-wishers who have assembled here and are ready to fight. 23

Comment:

Dhārtarāṣṭrasya* durbuddheryuddhe priyacikīrṣavaḥ'—Here Arjuna, by calling Duryodhana evil-minded, wants to convey how Duryodhana conspired their ruin several times and tried his best to humiliate them. Arjuna says, "We are the lawful owners of half of the empire but he wants to usurp it. He is evil-minded and these kings have assembled here to do good to him. But the duty of a friend is to give him such advice as may add to his welfare now and hereafter. But these kings instead of purifying his evil-mindedness want to enhance it and are really degrading him by instigating him to wage the war. They are not thinking of his welfare here and here after. As friends they should have advised him to rule over half of the kingdom and handover the

* There are two meanings of the term 'Dhārtarāṣtra' (1) Dhrtarāṣtra's sons or relatives (2) Those who usurp kingdom. Here this term has been used for Dhrtarāṣtra's son, Duryodhana.

other half to us, the Pāṇḍavas. Thus he would have possessed half of the empire, and his life in the next world would have also been pure and good."

'Yotsyamānānavekṣe'haṁ ya ete'-tra samāgatāḥ'—I want to observe the warriors who are so impatient to wage the war. They have favoured unrighteousness and injustice. So they are sure to be ruined again in the war against us.

'Yotsyamānān' It means that Arjuna wants to see those who have a keen desire to fight.

Link:–In the next two verses Sañjaya tells us what Lord Kṛṣṇa did after hearing Arjuna's words.

सञ्जय उवाच

एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥ २४ ॥
भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।
उवाच पार्थ पश्यैतान् समवेतान्कुरूनिति ॥ २५ ॥

sañjaya uvāca
evamukto hṛṣīkeśo guḍākeśena bhārata
senyorubhayormadhye sthāpayitvā rathottamam
bhiṣmadroṇapramukhataḥ sarveṣāṁ ca mahīkṣitām
uvāca pārtha paśyaitān samavetānkurūniti

Sañjaya said:

O Bhārata (born in Bharata-family), thus addressed by Guḍākeśa (one who has control over sleep viz., Arjuna), Hṛṣīkeśa (the lord of the senses) placed the magnificent chariot between the two armies in front of Bhīṣma, Droṇa and all the kings and said, "O Pārtha (the son of Pṛthā, Kuntī), behold all these Kurus assembled here." 24-25

Comment:

'Guḍākeśena'—'Guḍākeśa' has two meanings (i) 'Guḍā' means 'curled' and 'Keśa' means 'hair.' It means one having curly hair. (ii) 'Guḍākā' means 'sleep' and 'Īśa' means 'master.' It means who has conquered-sleep. Arjuna had curly hair and he had conquered sleep. So he has been called 'Guḍākeśa'.

'Evamuktaḥ'—One who is not a slave to sleep, idleness and worldly pleasures but is a slave (devotee) to God; God listens to such a person and even obeys him. Therefore in order to carry out the order of his devotee-friend Arjuna, Lord Kṛṣṇa placed the chariot between the two armies.

'Hṛṣīkeśaḥ'–'Hṛṣīka' means 'senses' and 'Īśa' means 'lord.' Thus 'Hṛṣīkeśa' means the lord of the senses. In the twenty-first verse and also in this verse this word has been used because Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the inspirer of minds, intellects and senses and who commands the whole world, has become a chariot-driver to carry out Arjuna's order. It shows how merciful He is to Arjuna.

'Senayorubhayormadhye sthāpayitvā rathottamam'—Lord Kṛṣṇa stationed Arjuna's noble chariot in the open space between the two armies.

'Bhīṣmadroṇapramukhataḥ sarveṣāṁ ca mahīkṣitām'—Lord Kṛṣṇa placed the chariot with His sagacity at such a point from where his kinsmen such as Bhīṣma, his preceptor Droṇa and chief kings and warriors of the Kaurava-army could be clearly seen.

'Uvāca pārtha paśyaitān samavetānkurūniti'—In the word 'Kuru' the sons of both Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu are included because both of them belong to the Kuru family. Lord Kṛṣṇa by saying 'Behold all these Kurus assembled here' means that by seeing them Arjuna may think that they are all one, whether they are on his side or on the opposite side and whether they are good or bad and thus feeling of kinship may develop in him. This feeling of kinship may lead to a feeling of attachment and make him inquisitive. Thus by making Arjuna an instrument, Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to preach the gospel of the Gītā for benediction of the creatures of the Kali-age. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa instead of using 'Dhārtarāṣṭrān', used the words 'Kurūn'. If he had used 'Dhārtarāṣṭrān', Arjuna would have possessed enthusiam and Lord Kṛṣṇa could not have got a chance to preach the gospel of the Gītā and Arjuna's delusion born of kinship could not have been destroyed. But Lord Kṛṣṇa thought it His duty to destroy Arjuna's delusion. As a surgeon first gives medicine to a patient suffering from boil so that the boil may suppurate and then performs an operation to remove the diseased part, in the same way God first arouses the hidden delusion and then destroys it. Here Lord Kṛṣṇa by using the phrase 'kurūn paśya' first arouses delusion to destroy it.

Arjuna in the twenty-second and twenty-third verses of this chapter wanted to behold and observe them. So Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "Behold these Kurus". Lord Kṛṣṇa could have placed the chariot without uttering any words but he intentionally used the phrase 'kurūn paśya' to arouse delusion in Arjuna.

There is a vast difference between love for the family and love for God though there is also a little similarity. When we have love for the members of the family, we don't mind their faults because we have the feeling of mineness with them. Similarly God also does not mind the shortcomings of His devotee because He has the feeling that he is His own. But in domestic love importance is attached to matter such as body etc., while in love for God there is importance of feelings. In family love there is importance of delusion, while in love for God there is importance of intimacy. In family-love there is darkness while in divine love there is light. In family-love a man is negligent of his duty while in love for God, being engrossed in love, a man may forget his duty momentarily but is never negligent of his duty. In family-love there is pre-eminence of the family while in love for God there is pre-eminence of God.

Link:—In the above mentioned verse Lord Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna to behold the Kurus. Now in the next verse Sañjaya describes what happened after that.

तत्रापश्यत्स्थितान्पार्थः पितॄनथ पितामहान् ।
आचार्यान्मातुलान्भ्रातॄन्पुत्रान्पौत्रान्सखींस्तथा ॥ २६ ॥
श्वशुरान्सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि ।

tatrāpaśyatsthitān pārthaḥ pitṛīnatha pitāmahān
ācāryānmātulānbhrātṛīmputrānpautrānsakhīṁstathā
śvaśurānsuhṛdaścaiva senayorubhayorapi

Standing there Arjuna then saw on both the armies his uncles, grand-uncles, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, cousins, sons, grandsons, friends, fathers-in-law, and well-wishers as well. 26

Comment:

'Tatrāpaśyat sthitān pārthaḥ pitṛīnatha pitāmahān ācāryānmātulānbhrātṛīnputrānpautrānsakhīṁs-

tathā śvaśurān suhṛdaścaiva senayorubhayorapi'—When Lord Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna to behold the Kurus assembled on the battle-field, Arjuna saw the members of his family assembled on both the sides. He saw his father's brother named Bhūriśravā who was just like his father. He saw his grand-uncles—Bhīṣma and Somadatta etc., preceptors–Droṇa and Kṛpa etc., maternal uncles such as Purujit, Kuntibhoja, Śalya and Śakuni etc., brothers and cousins—Bhīma and Duryodhana etc., sons such as Abhimanyu, Ghaṭotkaca, Lakṣmaṇa (Duryodhana's son) etc., grandsons such as the sons to Lakṣmaṇa; friends to Duryodhana named Aśvatthāmā etc., and also his friends; fathers-in-law such as Drupada and Śaibya etc., and also well-wishers such as Sātyaki and Kṛtavarmā etc.

Link:–In the next verse there is the description of what Arjuna did after seeing the members of his family in both the armies.

तान्समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान्बन्धूनवस्थितान् ॥ २७ ॥
कृपया परयाविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ।

tānsamīkṣya sa kaunteyaḥ sarvānbandhūnavasthitān
kṛpayā parayāviṣṭo viṣīdannidamabravīt

Arjuna, the son of Kuntī, seeing all those relations present there, was filled with extreme compassion and uttered these words in sadness. 27

Comment:

'Tān sarvān bandhūnavasthitān samīkṣya'—Besides the warriors mentioned in the previous verse Arjuna saw great grandfathers such as Bāhlīka etc., brothers-in-law such as Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Śikhaṇḍī and Suratha etc., sister's husbands such as Jayadratha etc., and several other relatives who were posted in different positions in both the armies.

'Sa kaunteyaḥ kṛpayā parayāviṣṭaḥ'— 'Sa kaunteyaḥ' means that Arjuna, who was ordered by mother Kuntī to wage a war and who full of valour and stout-heartedness entered the battle-field to observe the chief warriors of the Kaurava-army, became faint-hearted.

After seeing the warriors, who were related to him, through family and learning, on both the sides Arjuna suddenly developed the attitude of kinship because he thought that on both the sides there were his kinsmen and they would be killed in the war. In this way his family would be destroyed on either side. Thus his stout-heartedness gave place to faint-heartedness and manliness to effeminacy and he gave up the idea of the war. This faint-heartedness has been called by Lord Kṛṣṇa (in 2/2-3) 'Kaśmalam' viz., dejection or infatuation and 'Hṛdayadaurbalyam' viz., weakness of the heart. Arjuna (in 2/7) also accepted it as 'Kārpaṇyadoṣopahatasvabhāvaḥ' viz., nature being tainted by the vice of faint-heartedness. 'Kṛpayāviṣṭaḥ' means that the vice of faint-heartedness is a temporary phase in him while stout-heartedness is a permanent virtue of his life. Thus the temporary phase of faint-heartedness can't last too long while his stout-heartedness will remain for ever.

What is extreme compassion? The extreme compassion in Arjuna is that he does not think and make efforts to kill his cruel and unrighteous opponents such as Duryodhana, Duḥśāsana and Śakuni etc., who without any reason insulted the Pāṇḍavas, gave them troubles and tried to kill them somehow or the other. On the other hand he is taking pity on them (Gītā 1/35,46) and is thus deviating from his duty of the warrior-class.

'Viṣīdannidamabravīt'—Arjuna is very much dejected after thinking over the consequences of the war for the family, tribe and country and speaks the following words.

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ॥ २८ ॥
सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ।
वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥ २९ ॥
गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते ।
न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥ ३० ॥

arjuna uvāca

dṛṣṭvemaṁ svajanaṁ kṛṣṇa yuyutsuṁ samupasthitam
sīdanti mama gātrāṇi mukhaṁ ca pariśuṣyati
vepathuśca śarīre me romaharṣaśca jāyate
gāṇḍīvaṁ sraṁsate hastāttvakcaiva paridahyate
na ca śaknomyavasthātuṁ bhramatīva ca me manaḥ

Arjuna said:

O Kṛṣṇa, at the sight of these kinsmen thus arrayed here, prompted by war, my limbs give way, my mouth is parched, my body quivers and hair stands on end. The bow, Gāṇḍīva slips from my hand, my skin burns all over. My mind is reeling and I am not able even to stand. 28–30

Comment:

'Dṛṣṭvemaṁ svajanaṁ kṛṣṇa yuyutsuṁ samupasthitam'—Arjuna loved the name Kṛṣṇa very much. So he has been addressed by this name in the Gītā nine times, more than any other name. Lord Kṛṣṇa, similarly loved Arjuna's name 'Pārtha' (the son of Pṛthā, Kuntī). Therefore while talking together both of them addressed each other by these names and this fact was well-known to the people also. Therefore Sañjaya at the end of the Gītā in 18/78 mentions 'Kṛṣṇa' and 'Pārtha'–'Yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ' (viz., wherever is Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Yoga and wherever is Pārtha (Arjuna), the wielder of the bow).

Dhṛtarāṣṭra in the first verse of this chapter uses the phrase 'Samavetā Yuyutsavaḥ' (gathered together desirous to fight) and Arjuna here has said 'Yuyutsuṁ Samupasthitam' (arrayed eager to fight). But there is a vast difference in the views of the two. Dhṛtarāṣṭra is partial to his sons. So he uses the words 'Māmakāḥ' (Mine) and 'Pāṇḍavāḥ' (Paṇḍu's). But Arjuna is impartial. So he uses the term 'Svajanam' (Kinsmen) which includes persons of both sides. It means that Dhṛtarāṣṭra is worried about the death of his sons in the warfare while Arjuna is worried about the death of warriors in both the armies because he thinks that both the warring groups are his own kith and kin.

Till now the word 'Dṛṣṭvā'(having seen) has been used three times—'Dṛṣṭvā tu pāṇḍavānīkam' (Having seen the army of the Pāṇḍavas) (1/2), 'Vyavasthitān dṛṣṭvā dhārtarāṣṭrān' (Having seen Dhṛtarāṣṭra's party arrayed) (1/20), and here 'Dṛṣṭvemaṁ svajanam' (Having seen these kinsmen). It means that there is no change in the attitude of Duryodhana as far as the war is concerned. But there is a lot of change in Arjuna's attitude. First after seeing the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Arjuna like a hero gets ready for the war. But now after seeing his relatives present there, he is overwhelmed with extreme compassion, his bow drops from his hand and he is not inclined to fight.

'Sīdanti mama gātrāṇi ..... bhramatīva ca me manaḥ'—Thinking of the consequences of the war, Arjuna is worried and sad. So his limbs are giving way,

his mouth is getting parched, his body is shaking and his hair is standing on end. The same Gāṇḍīva bow, the sound of whose string terrified the enemies, is dropping from his hand and his skin is burning all over*. His mind is reeling, he is in a dilemma and he is unable even to stand on the war-front. He feels as if he will fall unconscious and it is a sin to wage the war.

Link:–After describing the eight signs of his sadness in the previous verses, now Arjuna mentions the inappropriateness of the war after seeing the inauspicious omens.

निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ।
न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ॥ ३१ ॥

nimittāni ca paśyāmi viparītāni keśava
na ca śreyo'nupaśyāmi hatvā svajanamāhave

O Keśava, I find the omens also inauspicious nor do I see any good in killing my kith and kin in battle. 31

Comment:

'Nimittāni ca paśyāmi viparītāni keśava'–O Keśava, I find the omens † inauspicious. Enthusiasm in the beginning of an activity leads it to success while dilemma leads to failure. So Arjuna says that the omens–that his limbs are giving way, his body is shaking, his mouth is getting parched–are not auspicious‡. Besides them other omens such as the falling of a meteor, untimely eclipse, earth-quake, horrible sound of birds and animals, obliteration of the black mark in the moon, falling of blood from clouds are inauspicious and all of them augur ill.

'Na ca śreyo'nupaśyāmi hatvā svajanamāhave'—I don't see any good, in killing my kith and kin either in this world or in the next world because only a sinner can destroy his kith and kin. Therefore sin alone will accrue to us by killing them and that sin will lead us to hells.

In this verse in both 'Nimittāni paśyāmi' (I see omens) and 'Śreyaḥ anupaśyāmi' (I see good) § Arjuna wants to say that whether he goes by the omens or by this common sense certain it is that it is futile to wage a war, and there is no good in it for them and for the entire world.

Link:–In the next verse Arjuna expresses his reluctance to get such an obnoxious victory.

न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ।
किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ॥ ३२ ॥

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* Worry has been compared with pyre. There is a little difference between the two. Worry burns a living man while pyre burns a dead man.

† The omens are not responsible for the occurrence of the incidents, they merely fortell the incidents.

‡ What Arjuna is regarding as omens are not omens in fact. They are the defects of senses, body mind and intellect which Arjuna finds in him because of his sadness.

§ Here the verb 'Paśyāmi' has been used for the omens of the past and the present and the verb 'Anupaśyāmi' has been used for the consequence in future.

na kāṅkṣe vijayaṁ kṛṣṇa na ca rājyaṁ sukhāni ca
kiṁ no rājyena govinda kiṁ bhogairjīvitena vā

O Kṛṣṇa, I covet not victory, nor kingdom, nor pleasure. O Govinda, of what use to us is kingdom or luxuries or even life ? 32

Comment:

'Na kāṅkṣe vijayaṁ kṛṣṇa na ca rājyaṁ sukhāni ca'—Suppose we get victory and then we get the kingdom of the entire earth and also pleasures, they are of no avail. I don't want either victory or kingdom or pleasures.

'Kiṁ no rājyena govinda kiṁ bhogairjīvitena vā'—When we don't desire anything (victory, kingdom and pleasures) of what use to us is the kingdom or pleasures? Victory, kingdom and pleasures seem pleasant only when there is a desire for them. But we have no desire for them. So how can they be pleasant to us? After killing our kith and kin we have no desire to live, because after death who will enjoy those pleasures? The so called pleasures will rather lead us to worry and sadness.

Link:–In the next verse Arjuna gives the reason why he has no desire for victory etc.

येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ।
त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ॥ ३३ ॥

yeṣāmarthe kāṅkṣitaṁ no rājyaṁ bhogāḥ sukhāni ca
ta ime'vasthitā yuddhe prāṇāṁstyaktvā dhanāni ca

Those for whose sake we seek kingdom, enjoyments and pleasures, are here arrayed on the battle-field staking their lives and property. 33

Comment:

'Yeṣāmarthe kāṅkṣitaṁ no rājyaṁ bhogāḥ sukhāni ca'—Whatever kingdom, pleasures and enjoyments we desire to have, we want them for our relatives and friends. With them we want to please and serve our teachers, uncles, grand-uncles and sons etc. We don't want to possess them for our personal enjoyment.

'Ta ime'vasthitā yuddhe prāṇāṁstyaktvā dhanāni ca'—But all of them are here arrayed on the battle-field staking their lives and property. They have decided to sacrifice even their lives on the war front. If all of them are killed, for whom should we desire kingdom, prosperity and pleasures?

'Prāṇāṁs tyaktvā dhanāni ca' means that they are standing on the battle-field staking their lives and prosperity. If they had got a desire for life and prosperity, why would have they stood here to be slain? It means that they have renounced every hope.

Link:–In the next two verses there is the description of the people for whom Arjuna wants kingdom, pleasures and enjoyments.

आचार्याः* पितरः पुत्रास्तथैव च पितामहाः ।
मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः श्यालाः सम्बन्धिनस्तथा ॥ ३४ ॥

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* In the twenty-sixth verse Arjuna by saying 'Pitṝnatha pitāmahān....' has mentioned uncles and grand-uncles first but here by saying 'Ācāryāḥ pitaraḥ....' he has mentioned teachers first. It means that because of his love for his kith and kin there he mentions uncles first, while in this context of 'not slaying' he first mentions the teachers who are great well-wishers of human beings.

एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन ।
अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥ ३५ ॥

ācāryāḥ pitaraḥ putrāstathaiva ca pitāmahāḥ
mātulāḥ śvaśurāḥ pautrāḥ śyālāḥ sambandhinastathā
etānna hantumicchāmi ghnato'pi madhusūdana
api trailokyarājyasya hetoḥ kiṁ nu mahīkṛte

Teachers, uncles, fathers, sons as well as grand-uncles, maternal-uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other relatives, though they may kill me, I would not seek to slay them, even for the sovereignty of the three worlds; how then for this earth? 34-35

Comment:

[Lord Kṛṣṇa in the twenty-first verse of the sixteenth chapter will say that passion, anger and greed, these constitute the triple gate to hell. Really these three are the different forms of passion. They are born out of our attachment to worldly things and persons. A passion has two sides—to get the desired thing and to get rid of the undesired one. The desired things are accumulation and enjoyments. The desire for accumulation is known as 'greed' and the desire for enjoyments is called 'passion.' If desire for accumulation and enjoyment is not satisfied, anger accrues. In anger, men perform actions to destroy those who create obstacles in the fulfilment of their desires. It proves that men fight to get the desired things and to get rid of the undesired ones. But Arjuna does not want to fight for either of the two.]

'Ācāryāḥ pitaraḥ.... kiṁ nu mahīkṛte'—If our kith and kin being prompted by greed or anger want to slay me, I don't seek to slay them out of anger or greed because these two are the gateway to hell.

Here the word 'Api' has been used two times by Arjuna. It means first why should they kill me when I don't create any obstacle to their selfish motive? Even then suppose they slay me by thinking that I worked as an obstacle to their selfish motive, I don't seek to slay them. Secondly though there is no possibility for the sovereignty of the three worlds coming to me by killing them, yet if I get it, I don't seek to slay them.

'Madhusūdana'*—It means that you killed the demons such as Madhu etc. But these teachers such as Droṇa etc., and grand-uncles such as Bhīṣma etc., are not demons they are our near and dear ones. So why should I have a desire to kill them?

'Acāryāḥ'—I should serve the respected and benevolent teachers such as Droṇa etc., rather than fight with them. It is proper on our part even to sacrifice our lives at their feet.

'Pitaraḥ'—How can we slay our uncles (fathers) out of anger or greed when we have got this body from them?

'Putrāḥ'—It is our duty to bring up our sons and our brother's sons, even though they may stand against us.

'Pitāmahāḥ'—When our grand-uncles are worthy of adoration to our father, they deserve still greater adoration from us. Though they may rebuke and punish us, yet we should not cause any suffering to them, we should rather serve them and give comfort to them.

'Mātulāḥ'—Our maternal uncles, being the brothers of our mothers who rear usdeserve adoration from us.

'Śvaśurāḥ'—These fathers-in-law are the fathers to my wife and my brother's wives. They are just like fathers to us. So how can I slay them?

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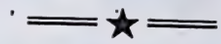
* Lord Kṛṣṇa is called Madhusūdana because he killed the demon named Madhu.

'Pautrāḥ'—We should bring up our grandsons in a better way than our sons, rather than kill them.

'Śyālāḥ'—How can we slay the loving brothers of our wives?

'Sambandhinaḥ'—I should serve and bring up all the relatives rather than kill them. It is improper on our part to kill them even for the sovereignty of the three worlds.



Link:–Now Arjuna justifies his intention not to slay his kith and kin even from the point of view of the consequences.

निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान्नः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ।
पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान्हत्वैतानाततायिनः ॥ ३६ ॥

nihatya dhārtarāṣṭrānnaḥ kā prītiḥ syājjanārdana
pāpamevāśrayedasmānhatvaitānātatāyinaḥ

O Janārdana, (Janārdana, the name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, means (a person who is worshipped by people for prosperity and emancipation) what delight can we derive by slaying the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra? Sin alone will accrue to us by slaying these desperadoes. 36

Comment:

'Nihatya dhārtarāṣṭrānnaḥ kā prītiḥ syājjanārdana pāpamevāśrayedasmānhatvaitānātatāyinaḥ'— We cannot derive even the slighest joy by slaying the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and the warriors of their army. If we kill them out of anger or greed we shall have to repent because the memory of those kinsmen will obsess us and the grief of their death will torment us. We can't get joy in this world by killing them and sin will accrue to us in the next world which will torment us there.

There are six kinds of desperadoes—one who sets fire, one who poisons, one who murders, one who seizes wealth, one who usurps kingdom and one who kidnaps woman*.

Duryodhana and his companions committed all these criminal offences. They secretly set fire to the residence where the Pāṇḍavas were expected to be sleeping, they poisoned Bhīma and threw him into water; they made an attempt on the life of the Pāṇḍavas; while gambling, deceitfully they deprived the Pāṇḍavas of their wealth and kingdom, and in the assembly Duryodhana insulted Draupadī by calling her his waiting-maid and persuaded Jayadratha to kidnap Draupadī and Jayadratha kidnapped her.

In the scriptures it is mentioned that there is no sin in killing a desperado (Manusmṛti 8/351). But it is also mentioned in the scriptures that non-violence is a great virtue. Therefore why should we slay our kith and kin out of anger and greed?

Though Duryodhana etc., being desperadoes deserve to be killed, yet sin will accrue to us as a result of such action because they are our kith and kin. It is mentioned in the scriptures that one who kills his kith and kin is a great sinner. So how can we kill them? Therefore it is better to break off our relationship with them rather than to kill them in the same way as relationship can be cut asunder with the son but he can't be slain.

* One who sets fire, one who poisons, one who murders, one who seizes wealth, one who usurps kingdom and one who kidnaps woman—These six are desperadoes (Vasistha Smrti 3/19).

Link:–Having pointed out the evil consequences of war Arjuna now dwells upon the sheer impropriety of waging the war.

तस्मान्नार्हा वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान् स्वबान्धवान् ।
स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥ ३७ ॥

tasmānnārhā vayaṁ hantuṁ dhārtarāṣṭrān svabāndhavān
svajanaṁ hi kathaṁ hatvā sukhinaḥ syāma mādhava

O Mādhava, we should not therefore slay the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, our kinsmen; for how can we, by killing our own kinsmen, be happy ? 37

Comment:

'Tasmānnārhā vayaṁ hantuṁ dhārtarāṣṭrān svabāndhavān'–The arguments against the slaughter of our kith and kin advanced so far (From 1/28 to this verse) are enough to convince us that it is improper to indulge in a destructive activity like war. How can we who are regarded as virtuous persons, perform such a hideous act ?

'Svajanaṁ hi kathaṁ hatvā sukhinaḥ syāma mādhava'—Mādhava, if the mere thought of their slaughter is so painful, just imagine how much more painful it would be to slay them after being blinded by avarice and anger. How can we feel happy after their slaughter ?

Delusion which is born of the sense of mine deprives Arjuna of his sense of duty as a member of the warrior-class. Where there is delusion there is no discretion. When discretion is suppressed by delusion, the sense of duty gets blurred.

Link:–Now the question arises why Duryodhana does not think along the same lines as you are thinking since you are also his kith and kin. Arjuna explains this in the two verses that follow.

यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥ ३८ ॥
कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम् ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनार्दन ॥ ३९ ॥

yadyapyete na paśyanti lobhopahatacetasaḥ
kulakṣayakṛtṁ doṣaṁ mitradrohe ca pātakam
kathaṁ na jñeyamasmābhiḥ pāpādasmānnivartitum
kulakṣayakṛtaṁ doṣam prapaśyadbhirjanārdana

Although these people, with understanding (discrimination) clouded by greed, don't perceive the evil of destruction of their own race and the sin accruing from enmity towards friends, yet O Janārdana (Kṛṣṇa), why should we, who see clearly the sin involved in the destruction of the family, not think of turning away from such a sin ? 38-39

Comment:

'Yadyapyete na paśyanti lobhopahatacetasaḥ kulakṣayakṛtṁ doṣaṁ mitradrohe ca pātakam'—Greed consists in desiring to have more and more of wealth, property, praise, respect and rank. It is because of greed that Duryodhana etc., have lost discretion and so they are not thinking about the disastrous consequences of the war and the sin that will accrue out of it.

This inordinate greed had deprived them of their sense of discretion and little do they realize that the kingdom for which they are bent upon by committing the sin of destroying their kith and kin will not stay long with them. The pleasure of possession is soon followed by the pain of deprivation which far outweighs the pleasure of possession. With minds clouded by greed for kingdom they don't perceive the deadly sin which will accrue by destroying their own race.

A battle causes loss of time, energy, life and property and people are assailed by worries and hardships. When there is a quarrel between the two friends, they turn into enemies. Drupada and Droṇa had been friends since childhood. After getting kingdom one day Drupada insulted Droṇa with the result that their friendship turned into enmity. To avenge his insult Droṇa got Drupada defeated by him (his pupil, Arjuna) and thus got half of his kingdom. Then Drupada got a holy sacrifice performed to destroy Droṇa and thus both Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Draupadī were born. Thus they don't perceive the evil of destruction of the race and the sin that will accrue from enmity towards friends.

An Important Fact

We are living well without the things which we don't possess. The paucity of things was not so afflicting as it is if we miss those things after possessing them. But these things can live with us for a short time only, because they can stay with us so long as our fortune favours us and then they slip away. Thus we remain the same as we were without getting them. We had to work hard to get them and are now sad after losing them. After getting them we felt somewhat happy only because of our greed. If we don't have this evil of greed, we can't be happy after getting the things. Similarly we get happiness from the members of our family because of infatuation and delusion. Thus we see that we derive worldly pleasure out of evils. Without an evil no worldly pleasure is possible. If there is no greed, there can't be any pleasure in accumulation of wealth. Greed destroys our discretion and we can't think in the right perspective.

'Katham na jñeyamasmābhiḥ... prapaśyadbhirjanārdana'—Arjuna says "Though Duryodhana etc., don't perceive any guilt in the extermination of their family and the sin accruing from enmity towards friends yet we should recoil from such a sin. (It will be described from the 40th verse to the 44th verse), because we know it very well that destruction of the family is an evil and enmity towards friends is a sin. If those friends cause us pain it will not be harmful for us because the pain will destroy our sins and purify us. But if we have feelings of malice and enmity, those feelings remain with us in other births also, will instigate us to commit sins and lead us to degradation. Therefore, we should certainly recoil from such a sin.

Here Arjuna is thinking about the greed of Duryodhana etc., but he is not thinking about his own infatuation and delusion. So he can't understand his duty. This is a rule that a man can't perceive his failings so long as he perceives defects in others. He feels rather proud of his superiority that he has no defect, while the fact is that everyone generally possesses one defect or the other. If we find fault with others, it is also a defect. Being proud of one's own virtues and finding fault with other are the two defects which we don't perceive in us though we do possess them. Thus Arjuna can't perceive his own infatuation and delusion because he is finding fault with Duryodhana and is proud of his virtue (All evils persist under the canopy of pride).

Link:–Now in the next five verses Arjuna mentions the sins accruing from destruction of one's own race.

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।
धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥ ४० ॥

kulakṣaye praṇaśyanti kuladharmāḥ sanātanāḥ
dharme naṣṭe kulaṁ kṛtsnamadharmo'bhibhavatyuta

With the destruction of a family its age-long family traditions disappear and with the disappearance of family traditions, impiety takes hold of the entire family. 40

Comment:

'Kulakṣaye praṇaśyanti kuladharmāḥ sanātanāḥ'—In the war there is destruction of the family. The family has its age-long traditions and time-honoured usages. But when the family is destroyed, its pious traditions and usages, which lead the living and dead members of the family to benediction, also perish because no one remains to maintain them.

Dharme naṣṭe kulaṁ kṛtsnamadharmo'bhibhavatyuta'—When the pious traditions and pious conduct perish, people lose their virtues and righteousness, and impiety takes hold of the entire family.

Now the question arises how impiety takes hold of the entire family when it is destroyed. The answer is that the people who wage the war are killed but impiety takes hold of the children and women who do not take part in the battle but are left behind. The reason is that when the conversant and experienced persons die in the battle no one is left behind to control the children and women and to teach them good conduct and decent behaviour. So they don't behave with decorum that is supposed to mark the righteous persons. So impiety takes hold of them.

अधर्माभिभवात्कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।
स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय जायते वर्णसङ्करः ॥ ४१ ॥

adharmābhibhavātkṛṣṇa praduṣyanti kulastriyaḥ
strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya jāyate varṇasaṅkaraḥ

With the growth of impiety, O Kṛṣṇa, the women of the family become corrupt; and with the corruption of women. O Vārṣṇeya (descendant of Vṛṣṇi), there ensues an intermixture of castes. 41

Comment:

'Adharmābhibhavātkṛṣṇa praduṣyanti kulastriyaḥ'—By following righteousness, inner sense is purified. With the purification of the inner sense, intellect becomes pure and pious and pious (Sāttvikī) intellect has discrimination between the right and the wrong. But when there is growth of impiety in the family, the conduct of the members in the family becomes bad. The bad conduct fouls the inner sense and the foul inner sense makes the intellect 'Tāmasī' (The intellect which veils knowledge and binds one to heedlessness is called 'Tāmasī'). With this 'Tāmasī' intellect men lose discrimination, regard the undesirable as desirable and the desirable as undesirable and act against the ordinance of the scriptures. With this sort of intellect the women become corrupt viz., unchaste.

'Strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya jāyate varṇasaṅkaraḥ'—Corrupt women give birth to hybrids*. If the man and the woman belong to different castes, the offspring born of the couple is known as hybrid.

Here Arjuna by addressing the Lord as 'Kṛṣṇa' means to say that He pulls every one. He further asks him in which direction He will pull his family.

Arjuna addresses him as Vārṣṇeya because

* 'Saṅkaraḥ' means the mixture of contrary things. When men don't perform duties and righteousness, intermixture of castes, races, dresses, languages and foods etc., ensues.

He belonged to the Vṛṣṇi clan. He means to say to what clan will his descendants belong when the destruction of his clan takes place? Therefore it is not proper to destroy the clan.

सङ्करो नरकायैव कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च ।
पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः ॥ ४२ ॥

saṅkaro narakāyaiva kulaghnānāṁ kulasya ca
patanti pitaro hyeṣāṁ luptapiṇḍodakakriyāḥ

Intermixture of castes leads the race and also the destroyers of the race to hell. Deprived of the offerings of rice-ball and water, the manes of their race also have a downfall. 42

Comment:

'Saṅkaro narakāyaiva kulaghnānāṁ kulasya ca'—The offsprings that are born of the intermixture of castes are not religious-minded and do not possess decorum and rectitude because they themselves are the product of persons without decorum. So they behave against the traditions and decorum of the race. Those who kill the persons of the race in the war are called destroyers of the race. Such persons lead not only themselves but also the whole race to hell because of the destruction of the traditions of the race.

'Patanti pitaro hyeṣām luptapiṇḍodakakriyāḥ'—The manes of the destroyers of the race fall because they don't get the offerings of rice-ball and water from them. The reason is that when they get these offerings, because of those virtuous actions they go to the lofty worlds. But when they don't get those offerings, they can't continue to live in those worlds and they are degraded.

The descendant who is a hybrid has no regard for his ancestors. So he has no sentiments to offer anything to them. Moreover even if he offers anything such as obsequies as a social custom without any regard and against the ordinance of the scriptures, that is not received by the manes. The reason is that he is not eligible to perform such rites. So they fall.

दोषैरेतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसङ्करकारकैः ।
उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥ ४३ ॥

doṣairetaiḥ kulaghnānāṁ varṇasaṅkarakārakaiḥ
utsādyante jātidharmāḥ kuladharmāśca śāśvatāḥ

The age-long caste-traditions and family-customs of the destroyers of the race get ruined because of the intermixture of castes created by the bad deeds of these race-destroyers. 43

Comment:

'Doṣairetaiḥ kulaghnānāṁ..... kuladharmāśca śāśvatāḥ'—With the destruction of the race in the war, the family-traditions are ruined. With the ruin of the family traditions, impiety takes hold of the family. With the growth of impiety, the women become corrupt. With the corruption of women there ensues an intermixture of castes. With the intermixture of castes the caste-traditions of the race-destroyers are ruined.

What are 'Kula Dharma' and 'Jāti Dharma'? In every caste, a family has its own traditions, customs and decorums which are known as 'Kula Dharma', whereas the traditions of a caste as a whole are known as 'Jāti Dharma' or 'Varṇa Dharma.' These traditions are general and they are approved of by the scriptures. These traditions get ruined if they are not followed.

उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणां मनुष्याणां जनार्दन ।
नरकेऽनियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुशुश्रुम ॥ ४४ ॥

utsannakuladharmāṇāṁ manuṣyāṇāṁ janārdana
narake'niyataṁ vāso bhavatītyanuśuśruma

We have heard, O Janārdana, that men, who have lost their family traditions, dwell in hell for an indefinite period of time. 44

Comment:

'Utsanna kula dharmāṇāṁ manuṣyāṇāṁ janārdana narake' niyataṁ vāso bhavatītyanuśuśruma'— God has endowed man with discretion and the right to perform new deeds. Hence he is free to perform good or bad actions. He should use discretion in performing actions. But he being overpowered by the greed of pleasures etc., does not use his discretion and acts against the ordinance of the scriptures and family-traditions. Consequently, he is censured, insulted and looked down upon in this life and suffers the tortures of hell for a long time in the life to come. This is what we have heard from our elders and ancestors.

In the word 'Manuṣyāṇām' the race-destroyers and all the other members of the race including the ancestors of the race-destroyers viz., manes and their descendants have been included.

Link:—In the verse that follows we are told how Arjuna was affected by the description of the disastrous consequences of fighting a battle.

अहो बत महत्पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम् ।
यद्राज्यसुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥ ४५ ॥

aho bata mahatpāpaṁ kartuṁ vyavasitā vayam
yadrājyasukhalobhena hantuṁ svajanamudyatāḥ

Alas! Goaded by the lust for throne and enjoyment we are bent on perpetrating the great sin of killing our kinsmen. 45

Comment:

'Aho bata mahatpāpaṁ kartuṁ vyavasitā vayaṁ yadrājyasukha-lobhena hantuṁ svajanamudyatāḥ'— Duryodhana and his companions are villains. Being goaded by greed they are not guided by righteousness and so they are prepared to wage the war. We have the power to discriminate between righteousness and unrighteousness, virtue and vice. But we are also prepared to wage this war to kill our own kinsmen, just like ignorant people. So it is something very surrising and shocking. By doing so we are going to commit a great sin, turning a deaf ear to the teachings of the preceptors and the scriptures.

The word 'Aho' expresses surprise. It is surprising that we have decided to commit a sin by waging this war even having known its horrifying consequences. The word 'Bata' expresses sorrow. It is a matter of sorrow that we are prepared to slay our kith and kin being over powered by greed for the transient kingdom and pleasure.

Greed for kingdom and pleasure is the only cause that we are bent on perpetrating the great sin of killing our kinsmen. It means that if we get victory in the battle, we shall get kingdom, wealth, honour, glory, power, pleasures and luxuries. Such sort of greed for kingdom and enjoyment is totally unjustified for such people as we.

In this verse Arjuna wants to say that a man

can carry out the behest of scriptures and teachers etc., only by honouring his own good ideas and his own knowledge. But he who dishonours them, can't adopt virtuous principles of the scriptures and teachers. Thus good thoughts and ideas don't spring up in him. Then who can check him from possessing evil thoughts and performing evil actions ? Similarly if we dishonour our knowledge, who can check us from committing this great sin of killing our kinsmen ?

Here Arjuna is thinking about the disastrous consequences of the war and so he is not willing to wage the war. But he is not thinking that his feelings of attachment, selfishness and delusion for the family are responsible for the sort of behaviour which is totally wrong for the thoughtful, righteous and brave member of the warrior-class.

[Arjuna in the thirty-eighth verse tells that Duryodhana etc., with minds blinded by greed don't perceive the evil of destruction of their own race and the sin accruing from enmity towards friends. Here he says that goaded by the greed for throne and enjoyment they themselves are prepared to commit the great sin. It proves that Arjuna knows that greed is the cause for sins. But in the thirty-sixth verse of the third chapter he asks, "Impelled by what does a man commit sin unwillingly? And why?" The answer is that here he has the feeling of attachment and infatuation for the family, so he wants to turn away from the war. Here he thinks that greed is the root cause of the sin of destruction of one's own race. But by hearing the gospel of the Gītā he wants to know the path or discipline by pursuing which he may obtain the highest good— the supreme bliss (Gītā 3/2). So in the third chapter he asks which is the force that impels a man to abandon his duty viz., there (in 3/36) Arjuna asks the question as a striver about his duty, not as a person having attachment for his family].

Link:–Engrossed in surprise and sorrow, Arjuna sets forth his decision arrived at after these arguments in the verse that follows.

यदि मामप्रतीकारमशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः ।
धार्तराष्ट्रा रणे हन्युस्तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥ ४६ ॥

yadi māmapratīkāramaśastraṁ śastrapāṇayaḥ
dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇe hanyustanme kṣemataraṁ bhavet

It would indeed be better for me if the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra armed with weapons, killed me in battle while I was unarmed and unresisting. 46

Comment:

'Yadi māmapratīkāramaśastraṁ śastrapāṇayaḥ dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇe hanyustanme kṣemataraṁ bhavet'— Arjuna says, "If I turn away from the war, perhaps our opponents will also recoil from it. Why will they fight, when we are determined not to fight? But even if, regarding us as their enemy, they zealously armed with weapons kill me, that will indeed be in my own interest, because it will be a kind of repentance for the determination which I had made in the war to kill my preceptors, and I shall be purified of the sins. It means that if I don't wage the war, I'll escape the sin and my race will not be destroyed."

[When a man talks about a subject, it has its effect on him also. When Arjuna possessed by extreme passion started to speak in sadness in the twenty-eighth verse he was not so much overwhelmed with grief as he is now. Then Arjuna didn't turn away from war but went on speaking overwhelmed with grief. But at last he turns away from war and sits down having laid down his bow and arrows. Lord Kṛṣṇa didn't speak in order to enable Arjuna to give an outlet to his feelings of sadness completely, because he knew that his teachings

would be of some avail to him only when there was an outlet of his sadness].

An Important Fact

The worldly people will support the arguments given by Arjuna but they will not agree with Lord Kṛṣṇa who will justify the war later. The reason is that as Arjuna is full of attachment and infatuation, the worldly people also belong to the same class. So they can't understand the point of view expressed by Lord Kṛṣṇa who always thinks about the welfare and benediction of creatures. They will say that Arjuna wanted to escape the sin by not waging the war, but it was Lord Kṛṣṇa who inspired him to wage the war. So it was not proper on His part to do so.

The fact is that Lord Kṛṣṇa did not inspire Arjuna to wage the war. He reminded him of his duty only. It was Arjuna who had invited Lord Kṛṣṇa to the war front. But seeing his kinsmen on the hostile side he was turning away from his duty. So Lord Kṛṣṇa inspired him not to neglect his duty out of delusion but to wage the war because there was nothing more welcome to the member of the warrior-class than the righteous war.

For example, a man is going to Badrīnārāyaṇa. But by mistake he starts going in the opposite direction. He happens to meet a person who asks him where he is going. The latter tells the former that he has taken the wrong direction, so he should turn back in order to reach his destination. Here the person shows the right direction (way) to the man who had lost it. Similarly Lord Kṛṣṇa showed Arjuna the right direction of his duty.

After seeing his kinsmen arrayed on the war front, Arjuna said to Lord Kṛṣṇa, "I'll not fight" (2/9). But after hearing the gospel of Lord Kṛṣṇa he did not say "I'll not fight" but he said, "I'll carry out your bidding" (18/73) viz., "I'll do my duty." It shows that Lord Kṛṣṇa reminded him of his duty.

The fact is that war was inevitable because Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself while revealing his supreme divine form to Arjuna said, "I am the mighty world-destroying time, the destroyer of the world. My purpose here is to destroy these people. Even if you don't kill them, all those warriors arrayed in the enemy's camp will not survive" (11/32). Thus this destruction of human beings was inevitable even if Arjuna did not fight. If Arjuna did not fight, Yudhiṣṭhira, who with his four brothers married Draupadī by obeying his mother, would certainly fight by obeying her. Similarly Bhīma would never deviate from the war because he had already taken a pledge to kill the Kauravas. As far as Draupadī is concerned she had even said that if her husbands, the Pāṇḍavas did not fight, her father (Drupada), her brother (Dhṛṣṭadyumna), her five sons and Abhimanyu would fight against the Kauravas*. All these facts show that the war was inevitable.

A man can't control the happenings that are pre-destined. By discharging his duty he can attain salvation but by neglecting it he can degrade himself. It means that man is free to attain either the desirable or the undesirable. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa, by reminding Arjuna of his duty, has preached human beings that they should always discharge their duty by following the ordinance of the scriptures and never turn away from it.

Link:–In the preceding verse Arjuna expressed his intention based on many arguments. What he did after this is contained in the verse that follows.

सञ्जय उवाच

एवमुक्त्वार्जुनः संख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत्।
विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविग्नमानसः॥ ४७॥

* Mahābhārata, Udyoga. 82/37-38.

sañjaya uvāca

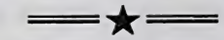
evamuktvārjunaḥ saṅkhye rathopastha upāviśat
visṛjya saśaraṁ cāpaṁ śokasaṁvignamānasaḥ

Arjuna, with his mind agitated by grief on the battle-field, having spoken thus and having laid down his bow and arrows, sank into the hinder part of the chariot. 47

Comment:

'Evamuktvārjunaḥ saṅkhye rathopastha upāviśat visṛjya saśaraṁ cāpaṁ śokasaṁvignamānasaḥ'—War is the root cause of all evils. It will destroy the race and will lead us to hells in the next world. By thinking so Arjuna, overwhelmed with sorrow, became firmly determined not to wage the war. Arjuna who had come to the battle-field with a great zeal with Gāṇḍīva bow in his hand, put the bow and arrows down and overwhelmed with sorrow sat on the seat of the chariot.

The main reason of Arjuna's grief is that when Lord Kṛṣṇa placed the chariot between the two armies and asked Arjuna to behold the Kauravas, he saw Bhīṣma and Droṇa standing before him. So his delusion was aroused. Thus he thought about the destruction of his race (which Duryodhana etc., didn't perceive being goaded by greed) and the sin accruing from it. Then he said that even if the warriors of the hostile army killed him while he was unarmed and unresisting, that would be for his good. Thus empowered by delusion Arjuna perceives good in turning away from the war and even in his death and finally having abandoned his bow and arrows and overwhelmed with grief sits on the seat of the chariot. Thus we see that it is delusion which changes a hero's (Arjuna's) stout-heartedness to soft-heartedness and manliness to effeminacy.



ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादेऽर्जुनविषादयोगो नाम प्रथमोऽध्यायः ॥ १ ॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde'rjunaviṣādayogo nāma prathamo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus by uttering Oṁ, Tat, Sat—the names of the Lord in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture on Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the first chapter entitled 'The Yoga of Dejection of Arjuna'.

The colophon at the end of each chapter written by sage Veda Vyāsa reveals the glory and greatness of the Gītā. 'Oṁ, Tat, Sat'*-this has been declared as the triple designation of the Absolute. These three names lead the creatures to benediction. They turn us towards God and spirituality and break off our relationship with the world. They wash away the mistakes which we might have committed in pronouncing the verses, words and letters in the chapter. So these three are pronounced at the end of each chapter.

By 'Oṁ' sage Veda Vyāsa means that this may wash away the mistakes of the verses, 'Tat' may turn his verses towards God and 'Sat' means that these verses may give an imperishable fruit.

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* Vide— Gītā 17/23-27

'Iti' means that he has no other personal motive besides this one.

The Gītā has been called 'Śrīmad' because it possesses paramount beauty and it is called 'Śrīmadbhagavad' because it has been uttered by Lord Kṛṣṇa who possesses six 'Bhagas' i.e., divine traits— wealth, virtue, glory, greatness, knowledge and dispassion.

It has been called the Gītā because it has been sung by the Lord Himself. According to the rules of Saṁskṛta grammar it should have been called 'Gītaṁ', yet it being the essence of the Upaniṣads, in feminine gender it has been called the 'Gītā.'

The essence of all the Upaniṣads is contained in it and it has emanated from the tongue of the Lord Himself, so it is called 'Upaniṣad.'

It is called 'Brahmavidya (Supreme Knowledge) because it leads creatures to benediction without any distinction of caste, creed and colour. It is called 'Yogaśāstra' because different Yogas (Disciplines) such as Karmayoga (the Discipline of Disinterested Action), Jñānayoga (the Discipline of Knowledge), Dhyānayoga (the Discipline of Meditation) and Bhaktiyoga (the Discipline of Devotion) are contained in it. By following anyone of these Disciplines a striver can realize his identity with God (Paramātmā).

It is a dialogue between Lord Kṛṣṇa and the devotee Arjuna. Arjuna has asked questions without hesitation and Lord Kṛṣṇa has answered them with generosity. So it is called the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna.

In the first chapter there is description of Arjuna's dejection. By the company of God and saints this dejection may create dispassion and thus may lead to benediction. Though Duryodhana also possessed dejection, yet having disinclination for God, his dejection is not called 'Yoga'. But it is called Yoga in the case of Arjuna because he could realize his identity with God by means of this 'Yoga.' So this chapter is entitled 'The Yoga of Dejection of Arjuna.'

The purpose of the concluding words which are given at the end of each chapter is that even a single chapter well meditated may lead the striver to benediction.

Words, letters and the Uvāca (said) in the first chapter

(1) In this chapter in **'Atha Prathamo'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are three words, in **'Dhṛtarāṣṭra Uvāca'** and **'Sañjaya Uvāca'** etc., there are twelve words, in verses there are five hundred and fifty-eight words and there are thirteen concluding words. Thus the total number of words is five hundred and eighty-six.

(ii) In this chapter in **'Atha Prathamo'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are seven letters, in **'Dhṛtarāṣṭra Uvāca', 'Sañjaya Uvāca'** etc., there are thirty seven letters, in verses there are one thousand, five hundred and four letters and the concluding letters are forty-eight. In this way the total number of letters in this chapter is one thousand, five hundred and ninety-six. Each verse in this chapter consists of thirty-two letters.

(iii) In this chapter **'Uvāca'** (said) has been used six times, **'Dhṛtarāṣṭra Uvāca'** once, **'Sañjaya Uvāca'** thrice and **'Arjuna Uvāca'** twice.

Metres Used in the first Chapter

Out of the forty-seven verses of this chapter, in the first quarter of the fifth verse as well as the thirty-third verse and in the third quarter of the forty-third verse 'ra-gaṇa' being used there is **'ra-vipulā'** metre; while in the first quarter of the twenty-fifth verse and the third quarter of the ninth verse 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'na-vipulā'** metre. The remaining forty-two verses are possessed of the characteristics of right **'pathyāvaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

Śrī Hariḥ

SECOND CHAPTER

Introduction

Duryodhana mentioned the great warriors of the two armies but Droṇācarya did not utter any word. So Duryodhana became sad. Then Bhīṣma blew his conch loudly to cheer Duryodhana. Hearing the sound of his conch, the conchs, drums and cow-horns etc., of the Kaurava-army and the Pāṇḍava-army blared forth. Afterwards (from the twentieth verse) the dialogue between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna began.

Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa to place his chariot between the two armies. The Lord, having placed the chariot between the two armies in front of Bhīṣma and Droṇa etc., asked Arjuna to behold those Kurus. Having seen his kinsmen he was filled with so much of compassion and sadness that he casting away his bow and arrows, sat on the seat of the chariot.

Sañjaya starts the second chapter in order to tell Dhṛtarāṣṭra what Lord Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna when he was overwhelmed with grief.

सञ्जय उवाच

तं तथा कृपयाविष्टमश्रुपूर्णाकुलेक्षणम्।
विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः ॥१॥

sañjaya uvāca

taṁ tathā kṛpayāviṣṭamaśrupūrṇākulekṣaṇam
viṣīdantamidaṁ vākyamuvāca madhusūdanaḥ

Sañjaya said:

Madhusūdana (He who destroyed the demon named Madhu) addressed the following words to Arjuna who was overwhelmed with compassion and drowned in distress and whose eyes were clouded with tears of despondence. 1

Comment:

'Taṁ tathā kṛpayāviṣṭam'—Arjuna orders Lord Kṛṣṇa to place his chariot between the two armies so that he may behold the war-minded warriors who are prepared to risk their lives by fighting against such a valiant warrior as he. But the same heroic and zealous Arjuna at the sight of his kinsmen becomes overwhelmed with grief, his limbs give way, his mouth is parched, his body quivers, his hairs stand on end, his bow slips from his hand, his skin burns all over and his mind reels. His stout-heartedness turns into faint-heartedness and he sits on the seat of the chariot. Sañjaya expresses the same feelings of Arjuna who was drowned in distress and despondency.

'Aśrupūrṇākulekṣaṇam'—Such a valiant warrior, Arjuna was full of infatuation and his eyes were so much drenched with tears that he could not even see clearly.

'Viṣīdantamidaṁ vākyamuvāca madhusūdanaḥ'—Lord Kṛṣṇa (Madhusūdana) said the following words (the words which will be said in the second and third verses) to Arjuna who was overwhelmed with grief because of his faint-heartedness.

Here 'Viṣīdantamuvāca' was enough because the word 'Vākyam' is also included in the verb 'Uvāca'. But the word 'Vākyam' has a special meaning. These words of Lord Kṛṣṇa are very profound and uncommon. They attack Arjuna's faint-heartedness and despondency which overpowered Arjuna in

disguise of his duty. They make him aware of his vice and arouse curiosity in him for benediction. It is because of these profound words of Lord Kṛṣṇa that Arjuna by becoming his disciple seeks refuge in him (2/7).

Sañjaya by using the word 'Madhusūdana' means to say that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the killer of demon, Madhu i.e., He is the destroyer of the people having villainous nature and so he will certainly destroy wicked natured Duryodhana and his group.

Link:–The next two verses contain what Lord Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna.—

श्रीभगवानुवाच

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम्।
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥ २ ॥

*śrībhagavān*uvāca*

kutastvā kaśmalamidaṁ viṣame samupasthitam
anāryajuṣṭamasvargyamakīrtikaramarjuna

The Blessed Lord said:

Arjuna, how has this infatuation overtaken you at this odd hour? It is shunned by noble souls; neither will it bring heaven nor fame to you. 2

Comment:

'Arjuna'—Lord Kṛṣṇa addresses him as 'Arjuna' which means pure in heart. The Lord means to say how he has become faint-hearted when it is quite unbecoming of him.

'Kutastvā kaśmalamidaṁ viṣame samupasthitam'—Lord Kṛṣṇa being surprised asks Arjuna why he has developed faint-heartedness instead of valour and zeal at this juncture. A man is surprised in two ways—out of his own ignorance and as a warning to others. Lord Kṛṣṇa's surprise here is a warning to Arjuna so that he may be aware of his duty.

'Kutaḥ' means that this vice of faint-heartedness is not permanent in him, it is only a temporary phase which will slip away.

'Samupasthitam' means you are faint-hearted not only in words and feelings but also in actions, you are overpowered by this faint-heartedness and therefore you have sat on the seat of the chariot by abandoning your bow and arrows.

'Anāryajuṣṭam'—Noble people don't accept faint-heartedness, they shun it because it does not lead them to any good.

The noble men who want to attain salvation have their aim of attaining salvation during activity as well as non activity. They don't shirk their duty. According to the prevailing circumstances they perform their duty thoroughly with zeal and readiness in order to achieve emancipation. So it is not proper on his part to refrain from this duty of fighting because of faint-heartedness.

'Asvargyam'—If we leave aside the goal of salvation and consider the matter from the worldly point of view, the attainment of heaven is the highest achievement. With this sort of faint-heartedness you can't attain even heaven.

'Akīrtikaram'—Even without having the aim of attainment of heaven a noble person performs those deeds which bring him name and fame in the world. But this faint-heartedness will defame you. So it does not befit you at all to be faint-hearted.

Here the Lord by giving these three expressions 'Anāryajuṣṭam' 'Asvargyam' and 'Akīrtikaram' in sequence has explained that there are three types of persons (i) Thoughtful—

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* The Lord is called 'Bhagavān' because he possesses six 'Bhagas' (divine traits). They are wealth, virtue, glory, greatness, knowledge and dispassion.

whose aim is to attain benediction. (ii) Virtuous—who by doing virtuous actions want to attain heaven (iii) Ordinary—who want name and fame in the world. So by giving the above mentioned three expressions Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to warn Arjuna that the infatuation will bring him neither benediction, nor heaven nor fame, but will degrade and defame him and lead him to hells.

Link:–In the verse that follows, Lord Kṛṣṇa points out what to do when a person is in the grip of cowardice.

क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परंतप ॥ ३ ॥

klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha naitattvayyupapadyate
kṣudraṁ hṛdayadaurbalayaṁ tyaktvottiṣṭha paraṁtapa

O Pārtha (son of Pṛthā viz., Kuntī), yield not to unmanliness. It does not befit you. Cast off this petty faint-heartedness and wake up, O vanquisher (scorcher) of foes. 3

Comment:

'Pārtha'*—Lord Kṛṣṇa addresses Arjuna as 'Pārtha' to remind him of Mother-Kuntī's message† and arouse the feelings of bravery which befits the members of the warrior-class. It means that he should not disobey his mother by showing unmanliness.

'Klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ'—It is because of faint-heartedness that Arjuna perceives it righteous not to wage the war and unrighteous to wage the war. Therefore in order to warn him Lord Kṛṣṇa says that it is impotence rather than righteousness not to wage the war. So he should abandon this impotence.

'Naitattvayyupapadyate'—You should not have developed this impotence in you, because you are the son of a brave mother of warrior-class and you yourself are also brave. Therefore this impotence does not befit you at all.

'Paraṁtapa'—You are the scorcher and vanquisher of foes. So will you gladden your enemies by showing your disinclination for the war?

'Kṣudraṁ hṛdayadaurbalyaṁ tyaktvottiṣṭha'—Here 'Kṣudram', has two meanings.— (i) This faint-heartedness will make you petty (mean) viz., it will deprive you of salvation, heaven or fame and if you don't abandon it, you will become paltry. (ii) This faint-heartedness is petty. So it is not difficult for such a brave person like you to abandon it.

You are thinking that being virtuous you don't want to commit a sin by waging the war, but it is your faint-heartedness. So by abandoning it, you should discharge your duty by arraying yourself to wage the war.

Lord Kṛṣṇa knows for certain that it is Arjuna's first and foremost duty to wage the war. So, he without caring for Arjuna's lame excuses, orders him quickly to wage the war with full preparations.

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* Being the son of Pṛthā Arjuna is called 'Pārtha.' This word manifests intimacy between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. In the Gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa has used this address thirty-eight times, more than any other address. The second place goes to 'Kaunteya' which has been used twenty-four times.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to say something special or give assurance to Arjuna or there is an overflow of love for him, He calls him 'Pārtha.' By addressing him thus, he wants to remind him that besides being the son of his father's sister, he is his loving devotee and friend (Gītā 4/3). Therefore He tells him something very secret and true for his welfare.

† Kuntī's message to Arjuna and to Bhīma who is ever eager to fight:—
(It is the time for which the mother of the warrior-class gives birth to her sons).

Link:—In the first chapter Arjuna gave several arguments against the war. But without attaching importance to his arguments, Lord Kṛṣṇa unexpectedly scolded Arjuna for the vice of his faint-heartedness and ordered him to array himself to wage the war. So Arjuna without getting any satisfactory reply to his arguments, got excited and immediately spoke.

अर्जुन उवाच

कथं भीष्ममहं संख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन।
इषुभिः प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजार्हावरिसूदन ॥ ४ ॥

arjuna uvāca

katham bhīṣmamaham saṁkhye droṇam ca madhusūdana
iṣubhiḥ pratiyotsyāmi pūjārhāvarisūdana

Arjuna said:

O slayer of Madhu, O slayer of foes, how shall I fight Bhīṣma and Droṇa with arrows on the battle-field? Both of them are worthy of worship. 4

Comment:

[Arjuna addresses the Lord as 'Madhusūdana' and 'Arisūdana' because he has killed unrighteous, villainous and cruel demons such as Madhu etc., and foes also who always are jealous of others without rhyme or reason. But how can he kill his great well-wisher, the respected grandfather Bhīṣma and adorable preceptor Droṇa who have great affection for him?]

'Katham bhīṣmamaham saṁkhye droṇam ca'—I am not turning away from the war because of faint-heartedness but because it is unrighteous for me to fight with the revered grandsire Bhīṣma and venerable teacher Droṇa. I would be called unmanly if I were afraid of death. I am not afraid of death, but I don't want to kill my venerable elders who have always been very affectionate to me.

Grandfather Bhīṣma has loved me since my childhood. When I addressed him as father he very affectionately used to say that he was my father's father. Similarly my adorable preceptor Droṇa has been so kind to me that he imparted to me better training than he imparted even to his son. He taught the use of Brahma-weapon (a kind of weapon which caused infallible destruction and was set in motion by incantation) to both of us but as far as its control or end is concerned, he taught only to me, not to his son. He also granted me the boon that no one would excel me in military science. So it is a mortal sin to wage war with them.

'Iṣubhiḥ pratiyotsyāmi pūjārhau'—Both Bhīṣma and Droṇa being elderly are venerable and adorable. They have a right to attack me. But it is a deadly sin for me to fight against them with arrows.

Link:—In the preceding verse Arjuna, being excited, revealed his decision to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Now being influenced by Lord Kṛṣṇa's words and balancing his decision with that of Lord Kṛṣṇa he says.

गुरूनहत्वा हि महानुभावान्
श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके।
हत्वार्थकामांस्तु गुरूनिहैव
भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥ ५ ॥

gurūnahatvā hi mahānubhāvān śreyo bhoktuṁ bhaikṣyamapīha loke
hatvārthakāmāṁstu gurūnihaiva bhuñjīya bhogān rudhirapradigdhān

It is better to live on alms in this world than to slay these noble elders, because after killing them we shall enjoy only blood-stained pleasures in the form of wealth and sense-enjoyments. 5

Comment:

[[In seems after reading this verse that the words of Lord Kṛṣṇa, uttered in the second and third verses, have an effect on Arjuna. He is thinking that though Lord Kṛṣṇa knows it is not justified for him to kill his venerable elders, he is unable to understand why he is ordering him to wage the war. So Arjuna does not speak with excitement but speaks somewhat politely].

'Gurūnahatvā hi mahānubhāvān śreyo bhoktuṁ bhaikṣyamapīha loke'—Arjuna first presents his point of view saying that if he did not fight with reverend Bhīṣma and Droṇa etc., Duryodhana by himself would not fight with him either. Thus he would lose his kingdom and suffer. Thus he would be leading a life of misery and could even depend on alms. But he thinks it better to live on alms than to slay his reverend elders.

'Iha loke' means—if I live on alms, people in the world will dishonour, reproach and insult me, but I think alms better than killing my reverend preceptors.

'Api' (Even) means—for me slaying the noble preceptors and living on alms—both are forbidden. But I think that it is more sinful to kill the preceptors than to live on alms.

'Hatvārthakāmāṁstu gurūnihaiva bhuñjīya bhogān rudhirapradigdhān'—If I carry out your command to wage the war, I shall enjoy the blood stained pleasures which will not give me peace and salvation.

Here a question may arise that Bhīṣma and Droṇa etc., preceptors were attached to Kauravas because of pecuniary motives. Therefore what is the objection if 'Artha-kāmān' is taken as an adjective qualifying 'Gurūn'? The answer is that it is not proper because they had no desire for money. It was incumbent upon them to fight on Duryodhana's side because they had eaten his salt.

Secondly, Arjuna has used the term 'Mahānubhāvān' (most noble). So how can the most noble souls desire money? Those who desire money can't be most noble. Therefore here 'Arthakāmān' is the adjective which qualifies 'Bhogān.'

An Exceptional Fact

Lord Kṛṣṇa in the second and the third verses orders Arjuna to array himself by casting off petty faint-heartedness and wage the war. But Arjuna gets him wrong because he thinks that Lord Kṛṣṇa has ordered him to wage the war so that he may enjoy the pleasures of kingship*. Arjuna perceived only evil in waging the war. He said that it would be better for him if his opponents killed him in the war. So with his mind agitated with grief he sat on the seat of the chariot (1/47). He had also said that Duryodhana and his companions being goaded by greed were prepared to wage the war. Now Arjuna says for himself that if he carries out his order and wages the war, he will enjoy only blood stained pleasures in the form of wealth and sensual enjoyments. Thus he perceives nothing but evil in waging the war.

When an evil comes to us in the form of an evil it is easier to do away with it than when it comes in the garb of something good. Rāvaṇa and devil Kālanemi couldn't be recognized by Sītā and Hanumān respectively

* The worldly people having a materialistic outlook can't even think of spiritualism. Here Arjuna also being overtaken by family attachment and infatuation is thinking only of materialism rather than spiritualism. So he is thinking that Lord Krsna wants him to wage the war so that he may obtain kingdom but Lord Krsna wants him to attain salvation.

because both of them disguised themselves as sages. Similarly Arjuna perceives that it is virtuous not to wage the war and it is an evil to wage the war but he is completely mistaken. Hence even Lord Kṛṣṇa finds it difficult and time consuming to bring Arjuna round to the realization of this fact.

Today in the name of unity in the society, people are determined to abolish the caste, stage of life system (Varṇa Āśrama) thinking of their action as virtuous. But they are not thinking about the disastrous consequences that this abolition will compel the people to lead a degraded and demoniacal life. In the same way in the accumulation of wealth, people don't perceive falsehood, fraud, dishonesty, knavery and treachery etc., as evils. Thus here before Arjuna also an evil of unmanliness has disguised itself as righteousness and thus he says how he can slay the noble elders. It means that whatever Arjuna considers a virtue is in fact an evil. But it does not appear to him to be an evil as this evil of the abandonment of his duty has crept in the guise of the virtue of non-violence because of his attachment to his relatives.

Link:–The holy words of God has such a singularity of effect that they have exerted a deep and far reaching influence on Arjuna as a result of which he starts doubting the correctness of his decision not to wage the war. In such a state of mind, Arjuna says.

न चैतद्विद्मः कतरन्नो गरीयो
यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः ।
यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषाम-
स्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥ ६ ॥

na caitadvidmaḥ kataranno garīyo
yadvā jayema yadi vā no jayeyuḥ
yāneva hatvā na jijīviṣāma-
ste'vasthitāḥ pramukhe dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ

We don't know which is preferable for us to fight or not to fight, nor do we know whether we shall win or whether they will conquer us. The sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, by killing whom we don't even wish to live, are arrayed against us. 6

Comment:

'Na caitadvidmaḥ kataranno garīyaḥ'—I can't take the decision whether I should wage the war or not, because you consider it better to wage a war but I don't do so as it is a sin to kill the noble elders and preceptors.

'Yadvā jayema yadi vā no jayeyuḥ'—If I carry out your order and wage the war, we don't know whether we shall win or lose.

Here it does not mean that Arjuna has no confidence in his own power but he is uncertain about the future because no one knows what may happen in future.

'Yāneva hatvā na jijīviṣāmaḥ'—Not to speak of pleasures and kingdom, we don't even wish to live by killing our kinsmen because by killing them we shall be bereaved of them and thus shall suffer the pangs of bereavement.

'Te'vasthitāḥ pramukhe dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ'—Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons are our kinsmen and they are arrayed against us. So how can we kill them? We are damned if we wish to live by killing them.

Link:–Finding himself at the cross-roads Arjuna being restless prays to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः
पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंमूढचेताः ।
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे
शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥ ७ ॥

kārpaṇyadoṣopahatasvabhāvaḥ
pṛcchāmi tvāṁ dharmasaṁmūḍhacetāḥ
yacchreyaḥ syānniścitaṁ brūhi tanme
śiṣyaste'haṁ śādhi māṁ tvāṁ prapannam

My nature is weighed down with the vice of faint-heartedness and my mind is confused with regard to duty. I entreat you, tell me what is decidedly good for me. I am your disciple. Do instruct me who have taken refuge in you. 7

Comment:

'Kārpaṇyadoṣopahatasvabhāvaḥ pṛcchāmi tvāṁ dharmasaṁmūḍhacetāḥ'—Arjuna did not think it desirable to turn away totally from the war, but to escape the sin he did not find any other alternative. So he wanted to turn away from the war and he thought of the action as a virtue rather than a vice of faint-heartedness. But when Lord Kṛṣṇa called his action faint-heartedness and unmanliness, Arjuna was reminded of his duty as a member of the warrior-class for whom it was not befitting to retreat. So Arjuna by accepting his faint-heartedness says that first his nature even by being a member of the warrior-class was weighed down with the vice of faint-heartedness and secondly his mind was confused with regard to his duty. Being overpowered by delusion he could not take the right decision about righteousness.

In the third verse Lord Kṛṣṇa ordered Arjuna, "Cast off your petty faint-heartedness and stand up for the war." So his doubt should have been removed. But he still had the doubt because on the one hand he thought that it was a sin to kill the kinsmen and the adorable elders, but on the other hand being a member of the warrior-class it was his duty to wage the war. So he was confused with regard to his duty. So he entreats Lord Kṛṣṇa to tell him what his duty is.

'Yacchreyaḥ syānniścitaṁ brūhi tanme'—In the second verse of this chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa told him that his dejection was shameful and it should be shunned by noble souls. So Arjuna thought that he should also follow the path adopted by noble souls. Therefore he prays to Lord Kṛṣṇa to tell him what is decidedly good for him.

First Arjuna was agitated and distressed but here he asks what is good for him. It shows that awakening for salvation as the goal is not aroused in a man so long as he is satisfied with his present situation. But when he is dissatisfied with his present situation and he wants to rise above it, he becomes aware of his real aim, salvation.

'Śiṣyaste'ham'— When Arjuna entreated Lord Kṛṣṇa to tell him what was decidedly good for him, he thought that such a question could be put to a teacher, not a chariot driver. Arjuna's conviction, that he was a chariot-warrior while Kṛṣṇa was his charioteer to whom he ordered to place the chariot between the two armies, has gone. So he becomes His disciple and also declares, "I am your disciple, so tell me what is decidely good for me."

'Śādhi māṁ tvāṁ prapannam'— Arjuna thinks that the preceptor can guide the disciple and the disciple will have to shoulder the responsibility to translate his teachings into practice and then make efforts to attain

salvation. But he wants to hand over this responsibility to his preceptor. As the mother of a breast-sucking child, not the child who falls sick, takes medicine for his recovery, the teacher takes responsibility of the disciple who takes refuge in him. So Arjuna by depending on the teacher and surrendering himself to Him says, "I have taken refuge in You, instruct me."

Here Arjuna by using the phrase 'Tvāṁ prapannam' says that he has taken refuge in Him. But actually he has not taken refuge in Him. Had he taken refuge in Him, he would have not uttered the words 'Instruct me' because a disciple has no responsibility of his own, the full responsibility lies with the teacher. Secondly in the ninth verse he says, "I shall not fight." It also shows that he has not really taken refuge in Him otherwise he might have not uttered these words. A disciple who takes refuge in his teacher has no duty, no responsibility of his own, he becomes merely an instrument in the hands of his preceptor and does whatever his teacher wants him to do. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa in the sixty-sixth verse of the eighteenth chapter has to say, "Seek refuge in me alone" (18/66). Then Arjuna in the seventy-third verse of the eighteenth chapter says, "I shall act according to Your word." It is here that Arjuna really takes refuge in Him.

In this verse there are four points which need attention –

(i) My nature is weighed down with the vice of faint-heartedness and I entreat you because my mind is confused with regard to duty. (ii) Tell me what is decidedly good for me. (iii) I am Your disciple. (iv) Instruct me who have taken refuge in You. If we think over these four points one by one, we come to know that as far as the first point is concerned the person to whom the question is asked, is free whether he answers the question or not. The second point shows that it is his duty to answer. In the third, the responsibility to guide the disciple so that he may attain salvation goes to the teacher. In the fourth the full responsibility for salvation of the disciple is the teacher's.

Link:–In the previous verse Arjuna takes refuge in Lord Kṛṣṇa but he thinks that Lord Kṛṣṇa wants him to wage the war which he regards as unrighteous and so He will again order him to wage the war. Secondly he thinks that perhaps he has not been able to convey his feelings to Him. So in the next verse Arjuna clearly expresses his feelings to Him against the war.

न हि प्रपश्यामि ममापनुद्याद्
यच्छोकमुच्छोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम् ।
अवाप्य भूमावसपत्नमृद्धं
राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम् ॥ ८ ॥

na hi prapaśyāmi mamāpanudyād
yacchokamucchoṣaṇamindriyāṇām
avāpya bhūmāvasapatnamṛddhaṁ
rājyaṁ surāṇāmapi cādhipatyam

Even on obtaining undisputed sovereignty and an affluent kingdom on this earth and Lordship over the gods, I don't see any remedy that can remove the grief which is drying up my senses. 8

Comment:

[Arjuna thinks the Lord Kṛṣṇa wants him to wage the war so that he may gain victory and kingdom and thus his grief may

be removed. But he is so grief stricken that even the joy of victory is not likely to remove his grief.]

'Avāpya bhūmāvasapatnamṛddham rājyam'—Even if I obtain an undisputed sovereignty and affluent kingdom on this earth, and my subjects become happy and prosperous and I may have no enemy on the earth, it will fail to remove my grief.

'Surāṇāmapi cādhipatyam'—Not to talk of the worldly pleasures, even lordship of Indra (the king of the gods) over the gods cannot remove my worry and grief. In verses thirty-two and thirty-three of the first chapter Arjuna wanted to turn away from the war because of his attachment to his kinsmen. But here he wants to turn away from the war because he thinks that it is an obstacle to salvation. So there is a lot of difference between the two situations.

'Na hi prapaśyāmi mamāpanudyād yacchokamucchoṣaṇamindriyāṇām'—How sad I shall become after the death of my kinsmen when I am so much grieved after thinking of it ! If I grieved over the loss of the kingdom, it might be removed by gaining it. But I am grieved by thinking of the massacre of my kinsmen. If I gain the kingdom, it will rather enchance my grief, because who will enjoy the kingdom after the death of the kinsmen? Therefore undisputed sovereignty and an affluent kingdom on this earth and lordship over the gods can't remove the grief that is parching my senses.

Link:–What Arjuna did after saying that even the possession of material objects would not relieve him of his grief, is contained in the verse that follows–

सञ्जय उवाच

एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परंतप ।
न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दमुक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभूव ह ॥ ९ ॥

sañjaya uvāca
evamuktvā hṛṣīkeśaṁ guḍākeśaḥ paraṁtapa
na yotsya iti govindamuktvā tūṣṇīṁ babhūva ha

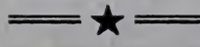
Sañjaya said:

After addressing the lord of the senses thus, Arjuna, the conqueror of sleep, said to Him, "I'll not fight", and became silent. 9

Comment:

'Evamuktvā hṛṣīkeśaṁ guḍākeśaḥ paraṁtapa na yotsya iti govinda-muktvā tūṣṇīṁ babhūva ha'—Arjuna honoured the Lord's word and wanted to obey it. But after thinking seriously over what Lord Kṛṣṇa had said and applying his own mind to his own thoughts, came to the conclusion that the war could result in providing him with an affluent kingdom, honour and fame. But it wouldn't wipe out his grief, worry and misery. Therefore it was not befitting for him to wage the war. So Arjuna speaks his mind in clear words "I'll not fight."

Having declared his decision not to fight and having nothing more to say, Arjuna became quiet.



Link:–In the next verse Sañjaya describes what happend when Arjuna flatly refused to fight.

तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः ॥ १० ॥

tamuvāca hṛṣīkesaḥ prahasanniva bhārata
senayorubhayormadhye viṣīdantamidam vacaḥ

O Bhārata (Dhṛtarāṣṭra), Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the lord of senses, as if smiling, addressed the following words to desponding Arjuna in the midst of the two armies. 10

Comment:

'Tamuvāca hṛṣīkeśaḥ prahasanniva bhārata senayorubhayormadhye viṣīdantamidam vacaḥ'—Arjuna filled with valour and enthusisam had entreated Lord Kṛṣṇa to place his chariot between the two armies so that he could behold the warriors. It was befitting for Arjuna to get ready for fighting which was his aim. But there instead of waging the war, he felt grieved. So Lord Kṛṣṇa started the gospel of the Gītā.

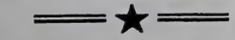
'Prahasanniva'—(Smiling, as it were) means that when Lord Kṛṣṇa perceived that Arjuna's enthusiasm for the war had changed into grief, he smiled. Secondly in the seventh verse he said, "Do instruct me who have taken refuge in You." But in the ninth verse he says, " I'll not fight". So Lord Kṛṣṇa smiled because the devotee who takes refuge in his preceptor just becomes an instrument in the hands of his preceptor and the preceptor is fully responsible for the duty of the disciple. The disciple has no option but to obey his preceptor and do as his teacher wishes. Arjuna's declaration 'not to fight' is practically a with draw as from his refuge in the Lord 'Iva' means that Lord Kṛṣṇa must have burst into laughter after hearing Arjuna's decision of not fighting, but He spoke smiling.

When Arjuna said, "I'll not fight", Lord Kṛṣṇa should have told him to do as he wished (18/63). But He thought that Arjuna was unable to take the right decision because he was overwhelmed with grief and worry. So there was an overflow of Lord Kṛṣṇa's love for him. God instead of paying attention to the words of his devotees, judges them by their feelings. So Lord Kṛṣṇa instead of paying attention to Arjuna's words "I'll not fight," started the gaspel from the next verse.

Moreover He accepts those devotees who take refuge in Him even by words as his own because of His boundless grace.

'Hṛṣīkeśaḥ'—'Hṛṣīkeśa' means that the Lord is the in dweller viz., He knows feelings of beings Lord Kṛṣṇa knows that Arjuna is turning away from the war because he is over powered by the urge of infatuation for his kinsmen and he does not see his grief melting away by merely acquiring kingdom. So he is saying "I'll not fight". But he also knows that as soon as his delusion is destroyed, he will act upon His instruction.

In 'Idam vacaḥ' uvāca the use of the word 'Uvāca' (spoke) was sufficient, there was no need to use the word 'Vacaḥ' (word) because 'Vacaḥ' is also included in 'Uvāca.' It seems repetition. But actually it is not so. The word 'Vacaḥ' has been used to point out the secret wisdom contained in the next verse uttered by Lord Kṛṣṇa in simple and easily understandable language.



Link:–Lord Kṛṣṇa preaches the gospel of freedom from grief to grieved Arjuna and says–

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।
गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥ ११ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

aśocyānanvaśocastvaṁ prajñāvādāṁśca bhāṣase
gatāsūnagatāsūṁśca nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ

The Blessed Lord said:

Arjuna, you grieve for those who should not be grieved for, yet speak words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead. 11

Comment:

[A man is grieved when he classifies objects and persons into two divisions—One's own and not one's own, such as our kinsmen and not our kinsmen, of our caste and not of our caste, of our stage of life and not of our stage of life, our followers and not our followers. We have the sense of mine, attachment, love and desire for those whom we regard as ours. Through these—the sense of mine and desire etc., evils such as grief, worry, fear, perturbation, commotion and strain etc., spring up. The root of all evils is the sense of mine and desire etc., this is the rule.

In the beginning of the Gītā Dhṛtarāṣṭra said, "What did my sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu do?" It shows his partiality towards his own sons and attachment for them, though the Pāṇḍavas regarded him more than their father.

Arjuna also developed the same attachment but he had no partiality, he was impartial and so he uses the terms 'Seeing all these relations' (1/28) and 'How can we, killing our own kinsmen, be happy' (1/37). It means that Arjuna had attachment for the Kuru family and because of the possibility of the destruction of the family he was grieved. To remove this grief Lord Kṛṣṇa preaches the gospel of the Gītā which begins with this eleventh verse. At last Lord Kṛṣṇa will declare that there is no justification for Him to grieve and he should take refuge in Him alone and should not grieve–'Grieve not' (18/66). The reason is that dependence on the world leads to grief while supreme or exclusive devotion to the Lord leads to the state which is free from vices such as grief and worry etc.]

'Aśocyānanvaśocastvam'—There are two things in the world—the real and the unreal, the soul and the body. Both of them are not to be grieved. The real is imperishable and therefore should not be grieved for and the unreal is bound to perish as it is perishing every moment, so it should not be grieved for. It means that they are grieved for only because of ignorance or lack of discrimination. Whatever circumstances in the form of birth-death, profit-loss etc., a man finds himself in, is the result of his fate viz., his previous actions. It is sheer ignorance to feel happy or sad in those favourable or unfavourable circumstances, because they are transient.

'Prajñāvādāṁśca bhāṣase'—On the one hand you are speaking words of wisdom but on the other hand you are grieving. It shows that you are merely talking tall, actually you are not wise, because the wise don't grieve for any one.

You also say that with the destruction of a family, its age–old traditions disappear, women become corrupt and there ensues an intermixture of castes which leads to hell and being deprived of the offerings of rice–ball and water, their manes also fall—these words like the wise also prove that the body is perishable while the soul is imperishable. Had the soul not been imperishable, how could you have feared the fall of slayers and members of the family ? Further you could have not worried about the fall of manes. Your worry and fear prove that the body is perishable while its master, the soul is eternal. So you should not grieve for them.

'Gatāsūnagatāsuṁśca'—It is out of ignorance that you grieve for the bodies because they will all perish. You should not grieve for them. Such grief is a blunder.

It is also a mistake to grieve for those who are dead because they have to suffer torture, if people here grieve for them. The departing soul has to drink and eat the tears and phlegm* shed by the people here. Similarly

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* The departing soul has to eat and drink the phlegm and tears shed by the relatives. So we should not lament the death of a relative but should perform obsequies.

(Pañcatantra, Mitrabheda 365)

The departing soul hereafter drinks the tears shed by the relatives here.

(Skanda Purāṇa, Brāhma, Setu 48/42)

we should not grieve or worry for those who are living because grief (worry) does not help them in any way. We should rather rear and help them.

Arjuna's limbs are giving way and his mouth is getting parched. The root of such feelings is his identity with the body. Such identity with the body creates affinity with those who nurse this body. That affinity gives birth to grief and worry by thinking of their death. So he is grieved (worried) and sad after thinking of those who are living as well as those who are dead. He is grieved (worried) about the dead because deprived of the offerings of rice-ball and water, the manes have a downfall (1/42), and he is worried about the living ones because they are arrayed on the battle-field staking their lives and property (1/33). Both types of worries are pertaining to bodies. So they are of the same character.

Instead of grieving for those who are dead we should offer water and rice–ball etc., because it is our duty. Similarly we should make arrangement to rear up those who are living. So we should give a serious thought as thought enables us to understand our duty while worry (grief) destroys the power of thinking.

'Nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ'—Discrimination between the real and the unreal is called 'Paṇḍā' (wisdom) and one who has developed discrimination is known as 'Paṇḍita' (wise). Such wise men don't grieve because they can discriminate between the real and the unreal—the imperishable self (soul) and the perishable body. Grief ensues only when the unreal is accepted as real i.e., there is a desire to maintain the body for ever. For the real there is no grief or worry at all.

Link:–In the next two verses the Lord explains why it is unwise to grieve for what is imperishable.

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥ १२ ॥

na tvevāhaṁ jātu nāsaṁ na tvaṁ neme janādhipāḥ
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ sarve vayamataḥ param

In fact there was never a time when I or you or these kings were non-existent. Nor is it a fact that we shall cease to be in future. 12

Comment:

[There are two things in the world, the soul, (the real) and the body (the unreal) and both of them are not to be grieved for, because the soul never ceases to be and the body is perishable. So here is the description that the soul is immortal while the body is mortal.]

'Na tvevāhaṁ jātu nāsaṁ na tvaṁ neme janādhipāḥ'–The people think that I did not exist before My incarnation and you and these kings were also non-existent before birth. But it is not so. All of us certainly existed because the real is always existent having no effect of time, place and circumstances etc.

'I, you and these kings had their pre-existence'—this declaration could suffice. But contrary to this it is said—'I, you and these kings had no such pre-existence—this is not true'. The reason is that by the latter expression 'that there was no such pre-existence—is not true', the fact of their pre-existence is emphasized. It means that the real is eternal. It was never a naught. By the term 'Jātu' the Lord means to say that in all times—past, present and future and in all climes, circumstances, states, incidents and things etc., this real never causes to be in the least.

Here by giving the word 'Aham' Lord Kṛṣṇa identifies Himself with other people in order to explain that the real never ceases to

be, while in the fifth verse of the fourth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "You and I have taken many births. I know them all, while you don't know", which shows that He as the Lord is different from men. In the fifth verse of the fourth chapter the Lord expresses His excellence, eminence and glory as compared to ordinary mortals while in this verse He expresses His unity with the soul of common men.

'Na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ sarve vayamataḥ param'—In future the bodies will not continue to be the same and one day they will perish but we (soul) will never cease to be because the real is eternal. It was neither non-existent in the past nor will be in future.

Lord Kṛṣṇa has talked about the past and the future by saying that there was never a time when they were non-existent, nor they will cease to be. But He has not talked about the present because they are clearly seen at present through bodies. In their present existence there is not race of doubt. But if we think seriously, we come to know that we (soul) exist at present but the bodies are kaleidoscopic. Therefore we should realize that we are different from the bodies, because we have our existence at present as we had in the past and we'll have in future, while bodies are perishable.

A man experiences his existence before sleep and after sleep, but he has his existence during sleep also while his body is changing every moment and it will perish one day. Similarly the bodies of all of us—I, you and these kings— did not exist in the past, nor will exist in future and at present also perishing every moment, but we (our own self) existed in the past, will exist in future and also exist now.

Our existence is beyond time because we are the knower of all times—present, past and future. The Lord has spoken this verse in order to explain this transcendental entity.

An Exceptional Fact

Lord Kṛṣṇa in this verse wants to say that the bodies are perishable while the self is imperishable and it is a rule that what exists in the beginning and the end, also exists in the middle and what does not exist in the beginning and the end, does not exist in the middle either.

But the question arises that now in the middle these bodies are visible. The answer is that the senses, mind and intellect with which we see and the worldly objects which are seen—both are perishable and change every moment. The man (self) identifies himself with the seen. Then he is called the seer. When the instruments of perception and the objects of perception are all perishable and transient, then how can the apparent onlooker be permanent? The apparent entity of the seer (onlooker) is there because of the affinity between the seer, the senses and the seen. In case there is no such affinity, then this apparent entity of the seer is melted away. But the base of the apparent entity which is truth, persists. That truth is called the base of creation, preservation and destruction and illuminator of all seeming entities. These names—base and illuminator are only in relation to the objects which they base and illumine. In absence of those objects, the truth ever remains as it is. He who has an eye on that truth can never grieve. This way 'I' 'you' and 'these kings' are not to be grieved at all.

देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा।
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति॥ १३॥

dehino'sminyathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā
tathā dehāntaraprāptirdhīrastatra na muhyati

Just as boyhood, youth and old age are attributed to the soul through this body, even so it attains another body. The wise man (enlightened one) does not get deluded about this. 13

Comment:

'Dehino'sminyathā dehe* kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā'—The body does not remain the same but it always changes. It passes by stages through babyhood, youth and old age. The statement 'Dehino'sminyathā dehe' proves that the soul is separate and the body is separate. The soul is the 'Seer' and the body is the 'Seen' Hence the changes of babyhood and youth etc., in the body are not in the soul. The soul is changeless.

'Tathā dehāntaraprāptiḥ'—As one does not grieve for the body when it passes through babyhood, youth and old age; similarly one should not grieve when the soul passes on to another body. As babyhood, youth and old age are the different stages of physical body, so (attaining) another body after death is the stage for the subtle and causal body.

If we perceive in the right perspective, we come to know that the body does not pass through babyhood, youth and old age only but it changes every moment. Similarly subtle and causal bodies also change every moment †.

Now the question arises that we can perceive our physical body but we don't perceive our subtle and causal body and their change. Wakefulness, sleep and sound sleep respectively are regarded as the states of physical, subtle and causal bodies. In sleep (dream) a baby sees itself a baby, a youth sees himself a youth and an old man sees himself as an old man. It proves that the subtle body also changes. Similarly in childhood one gets more soundsleep than in youth, and in old age it further decreases. It shows that there is a change in causal bodies also. Secondly a man is more refreshed in his childhood and youth after sleeping than he is in his old age. It also proves the change in causal bodies.

When one gets the body of a god, a bird or an animal etc., (because of identification of the self with the body) one thinks oneself the same, it is the change in subtle body. Similarly the nature (habit) of a god is different from that of a bird or an animal. It shows change in causal body.

A man passes through babyhood, youth and old age and thus there is a change in his state but he experiences that he is the same ‡. It proves that there is no change in his 'self' (soul).

Here a doubt comes to our mind that we experience the change in the physical body but we have no knowledge about our previous bodies after getting new bodies. The answer is that there is so much of pain at the time of death and rebirth that one forgets one's previous birth. When a man suffers from paralysis or old age, his memory becomes weak. Similarly by the pangs of death and birth one sinks into oblivion of his previous birth §. But one who dies suddenly without any pain can have memory of his previous birth ×.

When a man rises after a sound sleep, he says that he slept soundly and he was not aware of anything. It means that he knows that he was not aware of anything during sound sleep. This knowledge of nothingness by the self proves that the self existed even during the sound sleep. Thus his own self existed before his sleep, during his sleep and also after his sleep i.e., the self (soul) exists continuously. None feels his non-existence at any time, rather he feels his existence incessantly. He who feels himself separate from the body realizes that he is liberated and in that liberated state he ever remains. In that liberated state he may not know what bodies he possessed in the past but his realization that

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* The born one passes through babyhood, youth and old age; but here 'Deha' has been used for the human body.

† The physical body is left by a man (soul) when he attains another body. But subtle and causal bodies are not left until he attains salvation. He has affinity for them so long as he does not attain salvation.

‡ In the sacred books this knowledge is called 'Pratyabhijñā' (knowledge acquired by studying the scriptures).

§ A man dies by becoming unconscious because of much pain amidst his lamenting kinsmen. (Śrīmadbhā. 3/30/18)
At the time of death his breath stops and memory is lost. (Śrīmadbhā. 3/31/23)

× The impression of the previous birth of those who die suddenly and then are reborn suddenly, continues for some time but as they grow up, their dream like old memory is lost. (Mahābhārata Anuśāsana 145)

he is separate from the body, remains in tact.

'Dhīrastatra na muhyati'—The wise man (enlightened one) is he who can discriminate between the real and the unreal. Such a man is never deluded and he is not reborn because attachment for the Guṇas (qualities, modes) is the cause of birth in good and evil wombs and he breaks off his attachment with the qualities (modes).

Here 'Tatra' has been used for the difference between the soul (spirit) and the body, the real and the unreal, the permanent and the transient. It means that they are totally different and he is never deluded about this because he knows that he is different from the body.

Link:–Now Lord Kṛṣṇa urges us that we should be indifferent to the sorrow and suffering arising from transitory and perishable things like body etc.

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।
आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ।। १४ ।।

mātrāsparśāstu kaunteya śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkhādaḥ
āgamāpāyino'nityāstāṁstitikṣasva bhārata

O son of Kuntī, the senses-objects, which give rise to the feelings of heat and cold, pleasure and pain etc., are transitory and fleeting, therefore, Arjuna bear them patiently viz., remain unaffected by them or ignore them. 14

Comment:

[Here a doubt arises that in the verses from the eleventh to the thirteenth and then again from the sixteenth to the thirtieth there is the context of the spirit and the body, why are then these two verses of contacts of 'senses with objects' inserted in between? The explanation is that the Lord wants to say that all the worldly things such as bodies etc., are transient, perishable and kaleidoscopic and therefore these two verses befit the context].

'Tu'—'Tu' (indeed) has been used to explain that the transitory things such as bodies etc., are different from the permanent soul.

'Mātrāsparśāḥ'—Senses including the innersense are called 'Mātrā' and 'Sparśaḥ means 'Contact'. Therefore all the objects which are perceived by senses are called 'Mātrāsparśāḥ' (sense-objects). Can the affinity with objects also be included in 'Mātrāsparśāḥ'? No. The reason is that it is not the 'innersense' but the 'self' which accepts this affinity and that affinity remains even when the objects are lost.* A woman was bereaved of her husband fifty years ago. But if anyone calls her the wife of her husband Mr. A, she becomes alert even today. It shows that the assumed affinity has not yet broken off. It means that the objects are lost, yet the assumed affinity persists.

'Śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkhadāḥ'– Here 'Śīta' (cold) and 'Uṣṇa' (hot) stand for favourable and unfavourable circumstances. The favourable circumstances give us pleasure while unfavourable ones give pain. If the terms 'Śīta' and 'Uṣṇa' mean cold and heat, then they will represent only the objects of touch and their meanings will be limited. They will not represent all sense-objects, and circumstances. Therefore it is proper to take their meanings as 'favourable' and 'unfavourable' circumstances. The fact is that the favourable (desirable) or unfavourable (undesirable) circumstances and things can't give pleasure or pain but it is affinity with them which is the cause of pleasure and pain.

* The affinity with the unreal can perish only if we deny it. Actually the self has no affinity with the unreal. But it has accepted this affinity. So it can't be rooted out by any other means such as penances etc. It will be rooted out only when we cease to accept it.

So the Lord has called the objects 'Sukha-duḥkhadāḥ' (Producers of pleasure and pain).

'Āgamāpāyinaḥ'—All the objects have a beginning and an end, they are born and disolved. So they are 'Āgamāpāyī' i.e., they appear and disappear.

'Ānityāḥ'—It may be said that objects may not have pre-existence or post-existence but in between they do exist. The Lord declares that as they are 'Anitya' (transient) they don't exist even in the interim. They change every moment. They change so swiftly that no one can see them again in the same form because they don't maintain the same shape the next moment. Therefore the Lord has called all objects as 'Anitya.'

It means that all the worldly objects are transitory and fleeting and they change every moment. Not only the objects but the senses including the inner sense with which we perceive the objects are also transitory. There is always a change in them. For example the senses get tired by evening while working throughout the day and get refreshed in the morning after a night's sleep.

Here all objects in a broader sense are called 'Āgamāpāyinaḥ' (appearing and disappearing). In a finer sense they are called 'Anityāḥ' (changing every moment). In a more finer way they will be described in the sixteenth verse of this chapter as 'Asat' (non-existent) while the soul described earlier as eternal will be described as 'Sat' (ever-existent) in the sixteenth verse of this chapter.

Mere knowledge of the agreeable and the disagreeable is not at all defective. But attachment and aversion to them or pleasure and pain in relation to them is an evil. Not to be affected by such an evil is expressed by the expression 'Tāṁstitikṣasva'.

Secondly the body and senses and their actions have a beginning and an end while you as a spectator are different from them. They always change but you never change. Therefore you should remain unaffected by them i.e., you should ignore them. To remain unaffected (untainted) is called here 'Titikṣā'.

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa tells the result of remaining unaffected by the contacts of senses with their objects.

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।
समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥ १५ ॥

yaṁ hi na vyathayantyete puruṣaṁ puruṣarṣabha
samaduḥkhasukhaṁ dhīraṁ so'mṛtatvāya kalpate

O the best of men, the man to whom pain and pleasure are alike and who is not tormented by these sense-objects, becomes eligible for immortality. 15

Comment:

'Puruṣarṣabha'—Men generally try to change the inevitable circumstances. But Arjuna instead of trying to change them has thought to attain benediction which shows that he is the best of men.

'Samaduḥkhasukhaṁ dhīram'—The man of steady wisdom remains alike in pleasure and pain. He is the experiencer of pleasure and pain only when he is attached to the three Guṇas (qualities, modes) born of Matter (Nature) (Gītā 13/20-21). But when he gets fixed in the self, he does not experience pleasure and pain and becomes unruffled.

'Yaṁ hi na vyathayantyete puruṣam'—To the man of steady wisdom the sense-objects don't give pain. The pleasure ensuing from the contact of sense-objects is perturbing (Vyathā). Similarly the pain arising from their separation is also perturbing. He who has an eye on equanimity

can't be happy or sad by these objects. Such a person knows the favourable and unfavourable circumstances but he remains unaffected by them. They don't leave my impression on his mind.

'So'mṛtatvāya kalpate'—Such a man of steady wisdom becomes eligible for immortality viz., he acquires capability of realizing immortality. Being capable, he realizes immortality instantly because his immortality is axiomatic. It was only because of his affinity with objects (body etc.) that it was obscure.

An Exceptional Fact

This human life has not been bestowed upon the man to experience pleasures and pain but to attain the supreme peace, having obtained which he has nothing else to seek (Gītā 6/22). If we remain greedy and desirous to acquire favourable circumstances, we shall not be able to make use of those circumstances because our energy will be wasted in enjoyment of those circumstances rather than in making proper use of them. Similarly if we grieve in the unfavourable circumstances or in their possibility, we'll not be able to make use of them, rather we'll be brooding over them. To get pleased with the favourable circumstances is their enjoyment. The use of favourable circumstances for mere maintenance of the body and for the welfare of poverty-stricken people is their proper use. Thus riches in the form of favourable circumstances should be considered the property of the poor. We should neither be pleased with desirable circumstances nor displeased with undesirable ones. But we should make the best possible use of them. Otherwise we shall have to suffer pain.

There is the proper use of desirable circumstances if we having satisfied our needs use them to serve the needy and the destitute, instead of enjoying them ourselves. Actually our riches are for the needy and the poor. So we should utilize them for their welfare. These are the poor and the destitute who have enabled the rich to be proud of their riches. Had all the others been multimillionaires, could these millionaires have got pleasure and pride of their being millionaires? No. These poor and destitute people are the cause of their pleasure and pride. Therefore the rich people should serve the desolate and the destitute as it is their duty to do so. But if they don't do so and enjoy the riches themselves, only they are thankless.

Now the question arises how to make use of the undesirable circumstances. The answer is that the undesirable circumstances are painful when there is desire for pleasure. If that desire is renounced, the undesirable circumstances can't be painful. As a patient is given bitter medicines and painful injections, he does not get displeased, rather he is pleased because he knows that the bitter medicines and painful injections are the cures for his disease. Thus it is the proper use of undesirable circumstances to bear the pain without having any grudge against it. If he gets displeased with bitter medicines etc., that is brooding over unfavourable circumstances. It will result in great misery.

If we enjoy pleasures and are tormented by pain we may get heaven or hell but can't be eligible for salvation because salvation is attained by those who remain alike in pleasure and pain.

The Lord in the fourteenth verse has said that the contacts between the senses and their objects give rise to the feelings of pleasure and pain but they are transitory and fleeting. The moment we acquire them, their decay and parting start. They were neither with us in the past nor will remain in future and at present also they are going into naught. But by enjoying them we are spoiling our nature and are depriving ourselves of the attainment of salvation. Therefore if we make proper use of the available circumstances, we shall rise above pleasure and pain and attain the state of the highest bliss.

Link:–In the next three verses also there ensues the nature of the real (spirit) and the unreal (Matter, Body).

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥ १६ ॥

nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ
ubhayorapi dṛṣṭo'ntastvanayostattvadarśibhiḥ

The unreal has no existence and the real never ceases to be; the truth of both has been perceived by the seers of truth. 16

Comment:

'Nāsato vidyate bhāvo'—This body neither existed in the past before birth nor will exist in the future after death and is also perishing at present. Thus actually it is non-existent. This body is the world in miniature. The change in the body signifies the change in the world. Similarly the non-existence of the body signifies the non-existence of the world in all the times.

The entire world is burning continuously in fire in the form of time. On firewood being burnt, ash remains. But this time-fire devours the world in such a way that no remains are left. There is total annihilation of the world. Therefore it has been said that the unreal has no existence.

'Nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ'—The real never ceases to be. The Ātmā (spirit or soul) remains the same. It existed before the birth of the body, exists now when the body is undergoing change and will exist after the death of the body. Similarly God also ever remains the same while the world undergoes a change every moment.

A Vital Fact

The world is kaleidoscopic. It changes every next moment. So it can't be seen in the same state the very next moment. The bodies are taking birth and dying every moment but the process is not perceived with these dull physical eyes.* Similarly the world is also perishing all the time. But it is not perceived because the senses, mind and intellect etc., also belong to the same class to which the world belongs. So how can the perishable perceive the perishable? Only the imperishable (self) (spirit) can perceive it.

Secondly the self can't perform any activity without assistance of the world (body, senses, mind and intellect). It proves that all activities take place in the world rather than in the self. The self has no affinity with activities, and objects. It proves that the world with body, mind, senses and intellect etc., is non-existent. Only the over-soul (God) is ever existent, who ever remains untainted and is the base and illuminator of the entire world.

'Ubhayorapi dṛṣṭo'ntastvanayostattvadarśibhiḥ'—The seers of truth have perceived the truth about the real and the unreal, or the soul and the body. The fact is that the real is ever-existent, the unreal has no existence but it seems to exist because of the light of the real. Therefore essence of the real (Sat) and the unreal (Asat) is 'Sat' (ever-existent). The real has been called as 'Parā Prakṛti' (higher or sentient nature) (Gītā 7/5), 'Kṣetrajña (self, soul) (Gītā 13/1-2), 'Puruṣa' (spirit) (Gītā 13/19) and 'Akṣara' (the imperishable) (Gītā 15/16) while the unreal has been called 'Aparā Prakṛti' (lower or insentient nature), Kṣetra (non-self), Prakṛti (Matter) and 'Kṣara' (the perishable).

Arjuna is grieved by thinking that the warriors will die. So the Lord explains that the real never dies and the unreal never exists, it is continuously dying. Therefore it is not wise to grieve.

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* Though there is a continuous process of birth and death of bodies, yet the process is not perceived because of the subtle speed of time.

In the eleventh verse it has been said that 'Paṇḍita' (the wise) grieves neither for the living nor for the dead. In the twelfth and thirteenth verses the word 'Dhīra' (wise or enlightened) has been used for the person who realizes the distinction between the soul and the body in the fifteenth verse also 'Dhīra' has been used for the person who does not grieve over the decay of the body and the world and in the sixteenth verse 'Tattvadarśī' (the seers of truth) has been used for the disurning person who distinguishes between the real and the unreal. All these words Dhīra etc., show that the wise don't grieve and if they grieve, it means that they are not wise.

Link:–Now in the next two verses there is the description of the real and the unreal.

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम्।
विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति ॥ १७ ॥

avināśi tu tadviddhi yena sarvamidaṁ tatam
vināśamavyayasyāṣya na kaścitkartumarhati

Know that to be imperishable by which all this world is pervaded; for none can bring about the destruction of the indestructible. 17

Comment:

'Avināśi tu tadviddhi'—Here 'Tu' (indeed) has been used to explain 'Sat' the real out of the two 'Sat' (real) and 'Asat' (unreal) described in the preceding verse.

The Lord advises Arjuna to know that imperishable entity. He explains that this entity is abstract. By telling it abstract (Parokṣa) the Lord means to say that this abstract imperishable entity is pervading the whole world which appears as separate from that entity. In reality only this all-pervading entity exists while the world which appears to exist does not really exist.

By the term 'Tat' (that) it is not meant to say that 'Sat tattva' (the real) stands afar but it means that it is not the subject of senses and inner sense.

'Yena sarvamidaṁ tatam'*—The abstracterentity is described here. This whole world is pervaded by that imperishable entity. As all the ornaments made of gold have nothing but gold, the weapons made of iron have nothing but iron, the pots of clay have nothing but clay and in ice there is nothing but water similarly this world is pervaded by 'Sat' (real) (imperishable). So in the world there is nothing to be known except the real.

'Vināśamavyayasyāsya na kaścit-kartumarhati'—The spirit (Soul) is imperishable † while the body is perishable and is perishing every moment. No one can check its process of destruction. But whether you wage the war or recoil from it the imperishable can't be destroyed and the perishable can't be saved.

Here the word 'Asya' this means that whatever reality appears in the kaleidoscopic body, is because of the real entity (self) and that self (spirit) is different from the body.

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* 'Yena sarvamidaṁ tatam' has been used in the Gītā three times. Here it has been used for the imperishable by which the whole world is pervaded. It is described with the view of 'Sāṅkhyayoga' (The Discipline of Knowledge). In the twenty-second verse of the eighth chapter it has been used for God (Supreme Puruṣa) Who can be attained by exclusive devotion. Again in the forty-sixth verse of the eighteenth chapter there is the description 'By whom all this is pervaded' which is with the point of view of devotion.

† In the Gītā the Lord has called the spirit as well as Himself imperishable. But the difference is that the Lord incarnates and conceals Himself by His free-will while the spirit seated in Matter takes birth and dies because it identifies itself with the body.

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥ १८ ॥

antavanta ime dehā nityasyoktāḥ śarīriṇaḥ
anāśino'prameyasya tasmādyudhyasva bhārata

These bodies of the imperishable, indefinable and eternal soul are spoken of as perishable. Therefore O Arjuna, fight. 18

Comment:

'Anāśinaḥ'—A thing which never changes, never decays and never gets extinct in the least by any cause under any circumstances is called 'Anāśī'. The soul (spirit) is not exposed to destruction or change. So it is indestructible or imperishable.

'Aprameyasya'—The soul is beyond the domain of senses, speech and mind, so it is indefinable. It can be experienced only by having faith in the scriptures and the saints and their gospels.

The scriptures and saints don't compel any one to have faith in them. One is free to have such faith or not to have it. In case he reposes faith in them, that 'Tattva' (reality) is the object of his faith otherwise it is not the object of his faith.

'Nityasya'—The soul does not undergo any change, it never ceases to be, it exists all the time.

'Antavanta ime dehā uktāḥ śarīriṇaḥ'—These bodies of the imperishable, indefinable and eternal soul are spoken of as perishable i.e., they have an end. It means that they are perishing every moment. They are nothing but a mass of decay.

In the above sentence singular number has been used for the soul while plural for the bodies. It is so because the bodies are of three kinds— physical, subtle and causal and the single soul pervades all the bodies. Further in the twenty-fourth verse the Lord will call it all-pervading viz., omnipresent. It means that all the bodies are perishable while the soul is imperishable.

An Exceptional Fact

All the bodies which, are perceptible are perishable while the soul is imperishable and eternal. But this immortal soul though different from the body, has identified itself with the body and has developed 'ego' or 'I' ness with it and thus regards its death as self's (soul's) death. He who identifies himself with wealth and learning etc., calls himself as wealthy and learned etc. Similarly when one accepts the body as one's own, one develops the feeling of attachment or mineness for it and this attachment extends to wealth and family etc., because he accepts them as his own, by having affinity with them. By having this affinity of 'I'ness and 'Mineness' all evils are born, one can't discriminate between the real and the unreal and is thus grieved while the wise are not grieved because they realize that the real can't perish and the unreal can't exist.

'Tasmāt* yudhyasva'—Lord Kṛṣṇa orders Arjuna to fight i.e., discharge his duty by discriminating between the real and the unreal. He means to say that he should not grieve but wage the war because the soul is imperishable while bodies are perishable.

An Exceptional Fact

In the seventeenth and eighteenth verses there is particularly an explanation of the real and the unreal because the Lord wants

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* Here the word 'Tasmāt' has been used for drawing a conclusion after reasoning. In the Gītā 'Tasmāt' has been used either for drawing the conclusion after reasoning or at the end of a context. In 2/30, 3/19, 8/7 and 8/27 verses it has been used at the end of a context while in 2/25, 2/27, 2/37, 2/68, and 11/33 it has been used to conclude reasoning.

Arjuna to realize the real. By realizing the real, one gets rid of the unreal spontaneously. Thus by realizing this fact he should discharge his duty. It shows that every human being without any distinction of caste, creed, colour or stage of life can follow freely either the Discipline of Action or Discipline of Knowledge for his salvation. But in practical life the duty should be discharged according to one's Varṇa (Caste) and Āśrama (stage of life) by following the ordinance of the scriptures. Therefore, here Lord Kṛṣṇa orders Arjuna to fight.

Further in the thirteenth chapter where there is the description of the intuitive knowledge, Lord Kṛṣṇa in 13/9 also lays emphasis on non-attachment and non-identification of the self with the son, the wife, the home etc. If only hermits had deserved the Discipline of knowledge (Sāṅkhyayoga), the Lord would not have mentioned the need of non-attachment and non-identification of the self with the son, the wife, the home etc., because hermits have no sons, wives and homes etc.

Thus by meditating on the Gītā both the Disciplines of Knowledge as well as Action (Karma) have proved to be independent means for God-Realization for all human beings without distinction of any kind.

Link:–Upto the previous verse there is description of the seers who know the soul as imperishable. In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa in order to emphasize the same fact speaks of those who do not regard the soul as indestructible by a negative inferencea.

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम्।
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥ १९ ॥

ya enaṁ vetti hantāraṁ yaścainaṁ manyate hatam
ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyaṁ hanti na hanyate

Both of them are ignorant, he who holds the soul as slayer and he who considers it as slain; for the soul neither slays nor is slain.

Comment:

'Ya enaṁ vetti hantāram'–One who considers the soul as slayer is ignorant because the soul has no doership. But by identifying with the body it accepts itself as doer. As an artisan, however clever he may be, can't work without tools, similarly the soul without body can't do anything. Therefore the Lord in the thirteenth chapter declares that he who sees that all actions are performed by Prakṛti (Nature) alone realizes the self as the non-doer (13/29). It means that the self is not the doer. But it by identifying Itself with the body assumes Itself to be the doer of actions performed by the body. If a man does not identify himself with the body, he is not at all the doer of any activity.

'Yaścainaṁ manyate hatam'–One who holds the soul as slain is also ignorant. As the soul is never the slayer, so is it never slain because the soul always remains unaffected and unchanged. Only the perishable and changeable can be slain. How can the imperishable and unchangeable be slain?

'Ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyaṁ hanti na hanyate'—Both of them, he who holds the soul as slayer and he who considers it as slain, are ignorant. The question arises whether he, who holds the soul as slayer as well as slain, is not ignorant. The answer is that he is also ignorant because the soul is neither the destroyer nor can it be destroyed. It is always the same without any change. Therefore one should not grieve.

The soul has been described neither as a slayer nor as the slain because there was a context of the war before Arjuna. But actually the soul is free from all actions and modifications.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord explains how this soul is immortal.

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचि-
न्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥ २० ॥

na jāyate mriyate vā kadāci-
nnāyaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato'yaṁ purāṇo
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre

The soul is neither born nor does it die; nor does it become on coming into being. It is unborn, eternal, constant and primeval. It is not killed even when the body is slain. 20

Comment:

[The body constituted of elements undergoes six kinds of modifications— to be born, to exist, to change, to grow, to decay and to perish. But the soul remains unaffected by these changes. The Lord is explaining this fact in this verse.]

'Na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin-na'—This soul unlike the body is never born, it is eternal. So the Lord in 15/7 has declared, 'This soul in the body is an eternal portion of Myself.'

The soul never dies. Only that which is born, dies. The soul remains unaffected by all kinds of modifications. Of all the modifications, birth and death are the most important ones. Therefore the Lord has used 'Na jāyate' and 'Ajaḥ' for the unborn and also 'Na mriyate' and 'Na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre' for the unslain, twice.

'Ayaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ'—This imperishable element does not exist on coming into being, unlike a child that exists after birth and has a beginning and an end, it is free from different kinds of modifications and is without beginning and end.

'Ajaḥ'—This soul is never born, so it is called 'Ajaḥ' viz., unborn.

'Nityaḥ'—The soul is eternal. It does never decay in the least while the bodies and senses decay and lose their strength.

'Śāśvataḥ'—The soul is constant and changeless.

'Purāṇaḥ'—It is ancient and primeval. Generally a thing which becomes old does not grow, it rather perishes. But the soul neither grows nor perishes.

'Na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre'—The soul is not slain even when the body is slain. Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that the body undergoes six modifications because it is perishable while the soul is imperishable.

Here in these verses Lord Kṛṣṇa has made such a distinction between the body and the soul, as is rarely found anywhere else in the Gītā.

Arjuna was grieved after thinking about the death of his kinsmen in the war. So Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to explain to him that the soul is not killed even when the body is slain, so he should not grieve.

Link:–In the nineteenth verse Lord Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna that the soul neither slays nor is slain. In the twentieth verse He explained how it is not slain. Now in the next verse He explains how it does not slay.

वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम्।
कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ॥२१॥

vedāvināśinaṁ nityaṁ ya enamajamavyayam
kathaṁ sa puruṣaḥ pārtha kaṁ ghātayati hanti kam

How can a man who knows this soul to be imperishable, eternal and free from birth and decay, O Pārtha, slay any one or cause any one to be slain? 21

Comment:

'Vedāvināśinaṁ nityaṁ ya enamajamavyayam kathaṁ sa puruṣaḥ pārtha kaṁ ghātayati hanti kam'—The man who realizes this soul to be imperishable, eternal and free from birth and decay can have no inclination to slay any one or cause any one to be slain. He is free from egoism i.e., he has no feeling of agency in him and so actions don't taint him.

Here Lord Kṛṣṇa has explained that the soul is free from six kinds of modifications—to be born, to exist by the term 'Aja', to change, to grow by the term 'Nitya', to decay and to perish by the term 'Avināśī'.

Now a question arises why Lord Kṛṣṇa explained 'the man who slays' and 'the man to be slain' instead of the agent (subject) and action (object). The answer is that here the theme is war, so it is necessary to say so. But He means to say that the soul is neither the agent (doer) nor the action (object). Therefore one while discharging duty should not grieve while slaying any one or causing any one to be slain but discharge one's duty in accordance with the ordinance of the scriptures.

Link:—In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains that the soul is free from modifications by giving an illustration.

✓ वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा-
न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥ २२ ॥

vāsāṁsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya
navāni gṛhṇāti naro'parāṇi
tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇā-
nyanyāni saṁyāti navāni dehī

As a man discarding worn-out clothes puts on new ones, so the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies enters into others which are new. 22

Comment:

'Vāsāṁsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya navāni gṛhṇāti naro'parāṇi tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇānyanyāni saṁyāti navāni dehī'—In the thirteenth verse of this chapter it has been mentioned in brief that the wiseman does not get deluded when the soul transmigrates from one body to another. Now Lord Kṛṣṇa by giving an illustration explains that as a man by casting off worn-out clothes is not grieved, a man casting off worn-out bodies should not grieve.

Here the word 'Nara'(man) has been used for a human being including men-women, boys-girls, young-old etc., all.

As a man discarding worn-out clothes puts on new ones, so does the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies, enter into

new bodies. This casting off of worn-out bodies is called death while its acquiring new bodies is called birth. So long as this embodied soul has connection with Prakṛti, it goes on acquiring new bodies according to actions of the past or according to the thought at the moment of death.

Here the term 'Śarīrāṇi' (bodies) has been used in plural form. It means that so long as the embodied soul does not get emancipaed, it goes on acquiring new bodies upto eternity. The bodies it has acquired are countless. The term 'Dehī' has been used to indiate all embodied souls.

In the first half of this verse there is mention of discarding of the worn-out clothes while in the second half there is mention of casting off worn-out bodies.* So how can the illustration of old clothes befit bodies when bodies of even children and young men die ? The answer is that end of age means the worn-out bodies whether they are of children or youngmen or old men.

In this verse the Lord by using the terms 'Yathā' (as) and 'Tathā' (so) has explained that as a man discarding worn-out clothes puts on new ones, so does the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies, acquire others which are new.

Here a doubt arises that a man is free in casting off old clothes and putting on new ones, but he is not free in casting off the old body and entering into the new one. The answer is that here Lord Kṛṣṇa does not mean to talk about freedom and dependence. His aim is to dispel the grief arising from the separation of the body. One should not grieve over the death of a body because the soul remains unattached and unchanged. From this angle this example seems appropriate.

Another question that arises is that a man is happy by discarding old clothes and putting on new ones whereas he feels grieved while casting off the old body and getting into the new one. The reason is that a man by identifying himself with the body wants to live alive and thinks the death of the body as his own death. Thus he is sad. The grief (Sadness) is the result of the desire to live, not because of death. 'I may live'—this desire is latent and he has to die. It causes grief. But if he discriminates between the real and the unreal he is not sad, he rather rejoices. Thus it is because of his ignorance that he weeps. In his ignorance he is like a child who weeps while his old clothes are taken off and he is made to put on new ones. To remove this ignorance the Lord has used 'Yathā' (as) and 'Tathā' (so) words by giving an illustration of clothes.

Lord Kṛṣṇa has used the verb 'Gṛhṇāti' for putting on clothes and 'Saṁyāti' (enter) for embodied soul because the people generally think out of ignorance that the man changes the clothes living at his own place while the embodied soul has to go and enter the new bodies. So Lord Kṛṣṇa has used these two verbs keeping the worldly point of view in mind.

Something Note-Worthy

In the Gītā in 'Yena sarvamidaṁ tatam' (2/17), in 'Nityaḥ sarvagataḥ sthāṇuḥ' (2/24) phrases, the soul has been described as all-pervading, eternal, omnipresent and constant while in phrases such as 'Saṁyāti navāni dehī' (2/22) and 'Śarīraṁ yadavāpnoti' (15/8) it is said that the soul migrates (enters) to another body. So there seems to be a contrast, but in fact there is none. For example when a person grows from his babyhood to youth he says that he has grown young. But the fact is that he is the same, it is the body which has grown young. By identifying himself with the body he grafts the change of the body upon himself. Therefore in fact the soul doesn't migrate. But because of Its identification with bodies. It seems to migrate.

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* If we percieve by applying our discrimination we come to know that the body is wearing out every moment and it reaches a stage when it completely dies. But we don't realize this fact because we don't pay attention to it. This is darkness or ignorance (lack of discrimination).

Now the question arises why this cycle of birth and death has been going on from time immemorial. From the view-point of the Discipline of Action to reap the fruit of virtuous and evil actions, from the view-point of the Discipline of Knowledge due to ignorance and from the view-point of the Discipline of Devotion, due to disinclination for God, this cycle of birth and death goes on. Out of these three reasons, the chief one is God has granted liberty to living beings to make proper use of their lives but they have misused it and so they have to go through the cycle of birth and death. They can be free from this cycle by making proper use of this liberty. It means that if they start working for the welfare of others by renouncing their selfishness, they will be free from this cycle. Moreover negligence in discrimination * is the root of birth and death. If we attach importance to discrimination we can be free from shackles of birth and death. Similarly disinclination for God is the cause of birth and death which can be obliterated by having an inclination for him.

Link:–In the next three verses there is the description that the soul is super-mundane.

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥ २३ ॥

nainaṁ chindanti śastrāṇi nainaṁ dahati pāvakaḥ
na cainaṁ kledayantyāpo na śoṣayati mārutaḥ

Weapons can't cut the soul, nor can fine burn it, water can't drench it nor can wind make it dry. 23

Comment:

'Nainaṁ chindanti śastrāṇi'—Weapons can't cut this soul because they are made of the earth-element which can't even reach the soul. So how can they hurt the soul ?

'Nainaṁ dahati pāvakaḥ'—Fire can't burn the soul because the soul is beyond the reach of fire. It means that fire can never bring any change in the least in it.

'Na cainaṁ kledayantyāpaḥ'—Water can't drench the soul because water has no access to it. Water can never bring any change in it.

'Na śoṣayati mārutaḥ'—Wind can't dry the soul because it is beyond the reach of wind. It can never bring any change in the least in it.

Thus out of the five gross elements four can't hurt the soul. Now the question arises–why has Lord Kṛṣṇa not mentioned the fifth element-ether ? The answer is that Ākāśa (ether) is actionless. Earth, water, fire, wind are born of ether and they are incapable of acting on ether which is inert. Therefore when they can't even hurt ether, how can they hurt the soul which is beyond the reach of even Matter or nature (Prakṛti)? These elements with attributes can't reach the soul which is without attributes (Gītā 13/31).

The soul is eternal. All the four elements such as the earth etc., are activated by the power of the soul. So how can they impair the soul, the source of their power ? The soul is all-pervading while the four elements such as the earth etc., are the pervaded ones. How can the pervaded ones hurt the all-pervading one ?

Here is the description of the war. Arjuna is grieved at the thought of the imminent death of his kinsmen. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa

* Negligence in discrimination means that we don't act according to what we know. We know that it is wrong to tell a lie. But still we do so in order to achieve selfish ends. We know that it is wrong to give pain to others. But we derive sadistic pleasure in torturing others. Similarly we know that bodies are perishable but we have attachment and infatuation for them. This is known as an attempt to our knowledge.

explains to Arjuna that the soul can't be hurt by any of the weapons. A weapon can cut the body, not the soul, a fire-emitting missile can burn the body, but not the soul, the Neptune noose (Varuṇa weapon) can drench the body but not the soul, and the wind-missile can dry the body but not the soul. It means that the soul is not hurt by any of the weapons and missiles, it remains the same while it is the body which decays and dies. So it is sheer ignorance to lament for it.

अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।
नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥ २४ ॥

acchedyo'yamadāhyo'yamakledyo'śoṣya eva ca
nityaḥ sarvagataḥ sthāṇuracalo'yaṁ sanātanaḥ

This soul is uncleavable, incombustible and neither can be wetted nor dried. It is eternal, all-pervading, stable, constant and everlasting. 24

Comment:

[In this verse it is described why weapons etc., can't hurt this soul].

'Acchedyo'yam'—This soul is incapable of being cut. Even incantation and curse can't cut this soul, while they can cut the body as Śākalya was beheaded by Yājñavalkya's curse because the farmer could not answer the latter's questions.

'Adāhyo' yam'—This soul can't be burnt by fire because it is impervious to fire. It can't be burnt even by incantation and curse as the hunter was burnt to ashes by Damayantī's curse. Only that can be burnt by fire which is prone to fire. The soul is beyond burning.

'Akledyaḥ'—The soul is impervious to water. Water, incantation, curse and medicines etc., can't drench it. As it is said that the tune of 'Mālakośa' song wets a stone and the moon light wets the moon-gem. But this soul can't be wetted by them.

'Aśoṣyaḥ'—This soul can't be dried by wind, incantation, curse and medicines etc., as sage Agastya dried the sea.

'Eva ca'—By using these two words Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that this soul is beyond the reach of any action. So it should not be grieved for.

'Nitya'—This soul is eternal, it remains the same all the time.

'Sarvagataḥ'—The soul pervades all men, things and bodies etc., equally.

'Acalaḥ'—It is immovable, there is no movement in it.

'Sthāṇuḥ'—It is stable. It does not even shake or vibrate.

'Sanātanaḥ'—It is ever lasting and beginningless.

Something Note–Worthy

The world is transitory while the soul is eternal. Matter is kaleidoscopic while the soul is stable. All the things and persons etc., of the world are movable while the soul is immovable and all the worldly objects are subject to birth and decay while the soul is everlasting.

Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that men identify themselves with the bodies and material things and so they don't realize that they are different from the worldly things but even then the soul remains uniform and constant all the time.

अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।
तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २५ ॥

avyakto'yamacintyo'yamavikāryo'yamucyate
tasmādevaṁ viditvainaṁ nānuśocitumarhasi

This soul is unmanifest, unthinkable and immutable. Therefore, knowing it as such, you should not grieve. 25

Comment:

'Avyakto'yam'—The soul unlike the body is unmanifest because it can't be perceived by any one of the senses.

'Acintyo'yam'—Mind and intellect etc., can't be perceived by senses but they are thinkable. But this soul is unthinkable.

'Avikāryo'yam ucyate'—This soul is immutable i.e., it does not undergo any change while Matter is changing all the time. The cause of the entire creation is Matter. That causative Nature (Matter) is subject to change. The soul is beyond any change as It is transcendental.

In the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses Lord Kṛṣṇa has described the soul by giving eight adjectives of negation and four adjectives of affirmation. But the fact is that it can't be described in words because how can tongue illumine the soul which is the illuminator of tongue etc.? Therefore this realization about the soul is its real description.

'Tasmādevaṁ viditvainaṁ nānuśocitumarhasi'—Thus by knowing (realizing) this soul as uncleavable, incombustible, unmanifest, everlasting and immutable etc., one can't grieve.

Link:–Now in the next two verses Lord Kṛṣṇa says that even if one thinks of the soul as changeable (which is against the principle) one should not grieve.

अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम्।
तथापि त्वं महाबाहो नैवं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २६ ॥

atha cainaṁ nityajātaṁ nityaṁ vā manyase mṛtam
tathāpi tvaṁ mahābāho naivaṁ śocitumarhasi

O mighty armed, even if you regard this soul as constantly undergoing birth and death, even then you should not grieve. 26

Comment:

'Atha cainaṁ nityajātaṁ nityaṁ vā manyase mṛtaṁ tathāpi tvaṁ mahābāho naivaṁ śocitumarhasi'—Lord Kṛṣṇa here by giving the terms such as 'Atha ca' and 'Manyase' means to say that it is a fact that the soul is unborn (Gītā 2/20), yet even if you accept the contrary, you should not grieve because one who is born is bound to die and one who dies is bound to be reborn. None can escape this eternal principle.

A seed sown in the earth assumes different shapes–sprout, plant, tree and then it dries up and decays. The fact is that the seed undergoes change every moment. If this seed had remained the same even for a moment, how had it passed different stages upto the last stage of its drying up as a tree ? It gave up its prior form—it is its death; and it assumes a new shape—it is its birth. Thus it passes through birth and death every moment. Similarly this body also undergoes a change every moment. Sperm gets mixed with ovum and the mixture grows into a baby which is born. With its birth the process of death sets in which culminates in death. Thus this body undergoes a continuous change i.e., it is born, it decays and dies.

Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that if he holds this view that the soul undergoes birth and death like the body, there is no ground for grieving.

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २७ ॥

jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyurdhruvaṁ janma mṛtasya ca
tasmādaparihārye'rthe na tvaṁ śocitumarhasi

Death is certain of him who is born and rebirth is certain of him who is dead. You should not, therefore, grieve over the inevitable. 27

Comment:

'Jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyurdhruvaṁ janma mṛtasya ca'—According to the previous verse if the soul is regarded as constantly taking birth and constantly dying, one should not grieve because death is certain of him who is born and rebirth is certain of him who is dead.

'Tasmādaparihārye'rthe na tvaṁ śocitumarhasi'—This cycle of birth and death has been going on from time immemorial and will continue upto eternity. Therefore you should not lament over the inevitable. These Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons and Bhīṣma, Droṇa etc., who are born will surely die, you can't save them and after death they will certainly take birth, you can't check it. So why should you grieve?

As the sun has risen, it will certainly set, and if it is set, it will definitely rise. This is an inevitable fact which is known to all. Therefore none grieves over the setting of the sun. It implies that one should not grieve over the death of any body.

Whatever the Lord has stated in these two verses (26th and 27th) is not true in principle. By the expression 'Atha ca' the Lord has put forth the argument of the people who identify themselves with the body. This is not the correct principle. In no case Arjuna should grieve. To bring home this point to him, Lord Kṛṣṇa has explained from this angle also.

In these two verses Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that all the worldly things including the bodies undergo change from one form to another. Abandoning the first form is called death and change to the second form is called birth. One should not grieve over this cycle because it goes on.

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa mentions the simple law of nature about birth and death.

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥ २८ ॥

avyaktādīni bhūtāni vyaktamadhyāni bhārata
avyaktanidhanānyeva tatra kā paridevanā

O Bhārata (Arjuna), all beings were unmanifest before they were born and will become unmanifest again when they are dead; they are manifest only in the intermediate stage. What is the point then for lamentation ? 28

Comment:

'Avyaktādīni bhūtāni'—All the beings perceived now were not perceived before birth.

'Avyaktanidhanānyeva'— These beings will not be perceived after death.

'Vyaktamadhyāni'—All these beings are manifest in the interim (after birth and

before death). Their bodies were non-existent before birth and will remain non-existent after death just like a dream. During life they seem to exist but actually they are going into non-existence every moment.

'Tatra kā paridevanā'—It is the principle that the thing which has no origin and end, has no existence in its mid-state. Therefore these bodies which were unmanifest in their origin and will be unmanifest in their end are unmanifest even now, though they seem manifest. But the soul existed in the past, exists now and will also exist in future. So there is no point in lamenting for them.

Link:–Now the Lord dwells upon the spiritual nature of the soul.

आश्चर्यवत्पश्यति कश्चिदेन-
माश्चर्यवद्वदति तथैव चान्यः ।
आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति
श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥ २९ ॥

āścaryavatpaśyati kaścidena-
māścaryavadvadati tathaiva cānyaḥ
āścaryavaccainamanyaḥ śṛṇoti
śrutvāpyenaṁ veda na caiva kaścit

One perceives the soul as marvellous, another speaks of it as marvellous, another hears of it as marvellous; while none knows it ? only by hearing of it. 29

Comment:

'Āścaryavatpaśyati kaścidenam'—The knowledge of the self is not a subject of senses. The self can be known by the self itself, it is beyond the access of senses. As 'I am'—this knowledge requires no proof, no instrument, it is self-evident. This consciousness can't be experienced as separate from 'I'. This is intuited by the person himself. This is not a subject of senses and intellect. Therefore, the knowledge of the self is said to be marvellous.

The term 'Paśyati' has two meanings—to see with eyes and to know the self by one's own self. So here it has been used in the sense of knowing the self by one's own self (Gītā 2/55; 6/20 etc.).

When one sees with one's eyes, there are three things necessary—the onlooker, the object to be seen and sight i.e., the power to see. But while knowing the self these three things are not necessary. 'I am'–this can't be perceived by senses, mind and intellect but by one's own self.

When we want to search for a thing in a dark room, we need eye–sight as well as light. But if there is lamp-light, there is no need for another lamp to see the lamp which is lit. Similarly there is no need for other means to perceive the self. The self has its own light by which it can be known.

The body is of three kinds—physical, (gross), subtle and causal. The body which is nourished by food and water for its growth, is physical (gross) body. This gross body is the object of senses. The subtle body consists of seventeen elements–five senses, five organs of action, five vital airs, mind and intellect. This subtle body can be perceived by intellect and not by senses. The latencies (ignorance)

is the causal body. If we reflect on the three kinds of bodies, it is evident that the gross body is not the self as it changes every moment and it is an object of knowledge. Similar is the case with the subtle body. The causal body is an evolute of Nature. But the self is beyond Nature. Therefore the causal body is also not the self. But as far as the knowledge of the self is concerned, it is beyond them and this knowledge is marvellous. This is 'Āścaryavatpaśyati.' When the soul ceases its identification with the body, it knows itself and therefore it has been said that one perceives the soul as marvellous.

Here in this verse as well as in the third verse of the seventh chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa has used the term 'Kaścit' i.e., 'Some one knows Me in reality.' It means that it is very difficult to know the imperishable. But actually it is not so. The fact is that it seems difficult because there are a few aspirants who want to know the soul with a sincere heart.

'Āścaryavadvadati tathaiva cānyaḥ'—Another person speaks of it as marvellous because it is beyond the reach of speech. The speech is illumined by the self. Then how can it describe the illuminator? The great souls who speak of it can just give a kind of hint to draw the attention of the listeners.

Here the term 'Anyaḥ' has been used to emphasize the fact that only the few liberated souls who possess metaphysical knowledge can explain it fully to the aspirant and enable him to attain the imperishable. All don't possess the ability to remove his doubts and give satisfactory answers to his arguments.

'Āścaryavaccainamanyaḥ śṛṇoti'—Another hears of it as marvellous. Hearing of the scriptures and of other worlds is quite different from hearing of the soul. It means that this soul is something marvellous and uncommon and is beyond the reach of senses, mind and intellect etc. It rather illuminates them.

Here the term 'Anyaḥ' has been used to explain the fact that the person who hears is different from the one who knows and is also capable of explaining it to the aspirant in such a manner that its full nature is revealed to him.

'Śrutvāpyenaṁ veda na caiva kaścit'—There are some who don't know it even on hearing. It means that merely hearing will not help one to know it. On hearing when one gets established in one's own self, one will know one's own self*.

Now a question arises that an aspirant on hearing the words of the scriptures and the preceptor gets knowledge, why has it been said then that there are some who don't know it even on hearing of it? The answer is that it is the aspirant himself who by having faith in the words of the scriptures and the preceptor gains knowledge. Otherwise there have been several incarnations of God and there have also been liberated souls who held discourses on metaphysics, so by hearing their discourses all the people should have gained metaphysical knowledge. But actually it has not happened. Their discourses can be helpful to a striver having faith, but he will also have to get himself established in his own self. This expression doesn't mean to convey that knowledge of the self is impossible; it rather conveys that it is beyond senses. However hard efforts a man may make to know it, ultimately he will have to know himself by his own self.

What is knowing of the self by the self? There is a difference between doing, perceiving and knowing. Doing involves organs of action, perceiving involves senses while knowing is done by the self Itself.

The senses actually don't know; rather they only perceive which is useful in daily transaction.

This knowledge of knowing oneself by one's ownself is of two kinds—'I am different from the body and the world;' and secondly 'I have identity with God.' In other words it can be said 'I have no

* This fact has been pointed out in the Gītā several times—(2/55; 3/17; 6/20; 15/11).

affinity with the kaleidoscopic, perishable world while I have constant affinity with unchangeable, imperishable God.' After possessing this kind of knowledge one can know the soul in reality. This knowledge is beyond the reach of speech and intellect.

Link:–The next is the concluding verse about the discrimination between the body and the soul.

देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत।
तस्मात्सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ ३० ॥

dehī nityamavadhyo'yaṁ dehe sarvasya bhārata
tasmātsarvāṇi bhūtāni na tvaṁ śocitumarhasi

O Bhārata, this soul residing in the bodies of all can never be slain. Therefore you should not grieve for any being. 30

Comment:

'Dehī nityamavadhyo'yaṁ dehe sarvasya bhārata'—The soul residing in bodies of men, gods, animals, birds, insects etc., cannot be slain i.e., it is imperishable.

The term 'Avadhyaḥ' has two meanings– (i) It should not be slain, (ii) It can't be slain. For example a cow should not be slain because it is a deadly sin to slay a cow. But in case of the soul it does not mean that it should not be slain but it means that the soul can't be slain in any way by any one. It has also been mentioned in 2/17 that none can bring about the destruction of this indestructible substance.

'Tasmātsarvāṇi bhūtāni na tvaṁ śocitumarhasi'—Therefore you should not grieve for any being because the soul is indestructible while the perishable body can't remain the same even for a moment.

Here in 'Sarvāṇi bhūtāni' plural number has been used to emphasize the fact that one should not grieve for any living being.

The body is perishable because its nature is so. It is perishing every moment. But the self is imperishable. If this reality is realized, then no grief is possible.

Something Note-Worthy

In this section from the eleventh to the thirtieth verses there is the description that the soul which is imperishable and real is different from the body which is perishable and unreal. Unless one can discriminate between the soul and the body, one can't follow any one of the disciplines either of Disinterested Action or Knowledge or Devotion. Not only this but also one who wants to go to heaven should know the distinction between the two, otherwise after the death of the body who will go to heaven? Therefore all the philosophers who are believers, in spite of having different opinions about philosophy, agree to the fact that the soul is different from the body. Here the Lord wants to explain this distinction.

This is every one's own experience also that the body changes from babyhood to youth and then to old age. But there is an unchangeable one who knows this change. That one is the soul. Therefore the changeable and the unchangeable can never be identified. In this section Lord Kṛṣṇa has not used the philosophical terminology because people think that philosophy is a subject to study only. So he has used such words as the real and the unreal, the perishable and the imperishable etc. One who can discriminate between the two is not grieved in the least while one who merely studies philosophy is grieved.

A man may study the six systems of philosophy and may possess knowledge that there are the Absolute, the soul, the Nature and the world. But his knowledge is purely theoritical. On the other hand there is a practical striver or a devotee who

wants to realize his identity with God or who wants to surrender himself to God by renouncing his assumed affinity for Prakṛti and the world.

Link:–Arjuna was grieved by foreseeing the death of his kinsmen and preceptors. Moreover he was afraid that sin would accrue to him by killing them and that sin would lead him to the hell. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa preached this gospel from the eleventh verse to the thirtieth verse. Now he starts the worldly standpoint and reminds Arjuna of his duty as a member of the warrior class.

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।
धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ।। ३१ ।।

svadharmamapi cāvekṣya na vikampitumarhasi
dharmyāddhi yuddhācchreyo'nyatkṣatriyasya na vidyate

Looking at your own duty as well you should not waver, for there is nothing more welcome to a man of the warrior class than a righteous war. 31

Comment:

[In the first two verses He describes the advantage of the war.]

'Svadharmamapi cāvekṣya na vikampitumarhasi'—The man himself (soul) is a fragment of God. But by identifying himself with the body he accepts himself a Brāhmaṇa (of the priest class) or a Kṣatriya (of the warrior class) etc., and then he has to discharge his duty as a member of that class. Similarly one who accepts himself as a teacher or a father has to discharge the duty of a teacher or a father.

Here the duty of a Kṣatriya has been called 'Dharma' (righteousness) *. It is the foremost duty of a Kṣatriya not to flee from the war front. For a Kṣatriya righteousness is upheld by waging the war. So Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to discharge his duty by waging the war. He should never shirk.

'Dharmyāddhi yuddhācchreyo' nyatkṣatriyasya na vidyate'—There is nothing more welcome to a man of the warrior class than a righteous war viz., it is his main duty (Gītā 18/43). Similar is the case with the people of other classes— the priest class, the business class and the labour class.

Arjuna in the seventh verse of the second chapter requested Lord Kṛṣṇa to tell him what is good for him. In response to his request Lord Kṛṣṇa tells him that he will attain salvation by performing his duty of waging the righteous war. So he should not retreat from it.

यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।
सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ।। ३२ ।।

yadṛcchayā copapannam svargadvāramapāvṛtam
sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ pārtha labhante yuddhamīdṛśam

Happy (lucky) are the Kṣatriyas, O Pārtha, who get such an unsolicited opportunity for war, which is an open gateway to heaven. 32

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* In the eighteenth chapter (18/42-48) the Lord has described the innate duties of the people of four castes. There the term 'Dharma' (18/47) stands for one's duty. Thus the terms 'Karma' and 'Dharma' are synonymous.

Comment:

'Yadṛcchayā copapannaṁ svarga dvāramapāvṛtam'—Duryodhana put a condition before the Pāṇḍavas, "If you lose while gambling, you will be exiled for twelve years and will reside in an unknown place for one year. Then after thirteen years you will regain your empire. But if you are identified during that period, you will again be exiled for twelve years." The Pāṇḍavas accepted the condition and suffered twelve years' exile and one year's incongnito existence. After the expiration of the period when the Pāṇḍavas demanded their empire, Duryodhana refused to give them even as much land as could be covered by the point of a needle without war. The Pāṇḍavas made several efforts for a compromise. But Duryodhana bluntly refused. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, "You have obtained this unsought and unsolcited opportunity for waging a war. Such a righteous war is an open gateway to heaven."

'Sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ pārtha labhante yuddhamīdṛśam'—Those Kṣtriyas who get such an opportunity are really happy (lucky). He means to say that the happiness which is derived by discharging one's duty, is far superior to the worldly happiness (pleasures) which can be enjoyed even by animals and birds.

Link:–In the next four verses Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the evil consequences of not waging a war.

अथ चेत्त्वमिमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।
ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ।। ३३ ।।

atha cettvamimaṁ dharmyaṁ saṁgrāmaṁ na kariṣyasi
tataḥ svadharmaṁ kīrtiṁ ca hitvā pāpamavāpsyasi

If you don't wage such a righteous war, then abandoning your duty and forfeiting your honour, you will incur sin. 33

Comment:

'Atha cettvamimaṁ dharmyaṁ saṁgrāmaṁ na kariṣyasi tataḥ svadharmaṁ kīrtiṁ ca hitvā pāpamavāpsyasi'—Even if you don't want to discharge your duty by waging the war, bound by your own action born of your nature, you will have to perform it against your will (18/60). If you don't wage the war, you will neglect your duty and you will not only lose your reputation but incur sin also. Moreover by abandoning your duty, you will have to accept the duty of others and so you will incur sin and by abandoning the war you will be regarded as an unmanly warrior and thus you will lose your honour and reputation.

अकीर्तिं चापि भूतानि
कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।
सम्भावितस्य चाकीर्ति-
र्मरणादतिरिच्यते ।। ३४ ।।

akīrtiṁ cāpi bhūtāni
kathayiṣyanti te'vyayām
sambhāvitasya cākīrti-
rmaraṇādatiricyate

All creatures will ever recount your undying infamy, and infamy is surely worse than death for a man enjoying popular esteem. 34

Comment:

'Akīrtiṁ cāpi bhūtāni kathayiṣyanti te'vyayām'—Men, gods, genies, and demons etc., all who do not have even the least affinity of friendship or enmity with you, such common beings will recount your infamy and dishonour and will call you effeminate, if you don't wage the war. They will disparage your chivalry and will say that you proved to be a coward which could not even be thought of.

By using the word 'Te' (thy) Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that Arjuna who is renowned in heaven, in this world as well as in the lower world for his manliness, will be called unmanly. By using the term 'Avyayām' (Everlasting) He means that as he is famous for his excellence and bravery, he will be unpopular for his baseness and effeminacy for ever.

'Saṁbhāvitasya cākīrtirmaraṇādatiricyate'—In the first half of this verse the Lord discussed Arjuna's disparagement by common people. Now He is talking in general terms.

In the world if any man who is regarded superior to others and enjoys popular esteem loses his honour and fame, his infamy is more painful to him than even death because in natural death he does not lose his name and fame while he loses his name and fame by recoiling from his duty. In case of natural death no crime or sin is committed, but shirking duty is a sin. Shirking duty brings much discredit.

भयाद्रणादुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।
येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥ ३५ ॥

bhayādraṇāduparataṁ maṁsyante tvāṁ mahārathāḥ
yeṣāṁ ca tvaṁ bahumato bhūtvā yāsyasi lāghavam

The great chariot-warriors who held you in high esteem, will hold you lightly, thinking that you have desisted from the war out of fear. 35

Comment:

'Bhayādraṇāduparataṁ maṁsyante tvāṁ mahārathāḥ'—If you think that you have desisted from the war in order to attain salvation by avoiding the sin, it is not true. If you had thought it a sin to wage the war, you might have devoted your time to devotion and meditation in solitude and would not have invited Me to wage the war. Therefore if you desist from the war, all the creatures will think that you have done so out of fear, not out of the sense of duty and righteousness because it is the first and foremost duty of a Kṣatriya to fight.

'Yeṣāṁ ca tvaṁ bahumato bhūtvā yāsyasi lāghavam'—The great chariot-warriors such as Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Kṛpa and Śalya etc., who hold you in high esteem for your mighty valour because you have defeated several demons, gods and demi-gods etc., will slight you as one who has fled from the war-front out of fear.

अवाच्यवादांश्च बहून्वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः ।
निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम् ॥ ३६ ॥

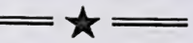
avācyavādāṁśca bahūnvadiṣyanti tavāhitāḥ
nindantastava sāmarthyaṁ tato duḥkhataraṁ nu kim

Your enemies, disparaging your strength, will speak many unbecoming words. What can be more distressing than this ? 36

Comment:

'Avācyavādāṁśca bahūnvadiṣyanti tavāhitāḥ nindantastava sāmarthyam'—Your sworn enemies such as Duryodhana, Duḥśāsana and Karṇa etc., in spite of knowing your deeds of valour will slander your strength and will laugh at you and call you effeminate and impotent. How will you bear those insolent jokes and irrepairable ignominy ?

'Tato duḥkhataraṁ nu kim'—What can be more painful than this? It is generally seen that a person of respectable and high standing cannot tolerate the insult done by the persons of low standing and he performs deeds of mighty valour beyond expectation. Similarly you will not be able to tolerate the ignominy and slander and so there will be no alternative for you but to wage the war that has been declared. So how will you bear that ignominy ?



Link:–After explaining the adverse consequences of not waging the war in the preceding four verses now in the next two verses Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the favourable consequences of the war.

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥ ३७ ॥

hato vā prāpsyasi svargaṁ jitvā vā bhokṣyase mahīm
tasmāduttiṣṭha kaunteya yuddhāya kṛtaniścayaḥ

Slain in battle you will gain heaven, gaining victory you will enjoy sovereignty of the earth; therefore, arise, O son of Kuntī, determined to fight. 37

Comment:

'Hato vā prāpsyasi svargaṁ jitvā vā bhokṣyase mahīm'—In the sixth verse of this chapter Arjuna raised a question that they did not know whether they would conquer the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra or Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons would conquer them. So Lord Kṛṣṇa answers the question and says, "If you are killed by Karṇa etc., you will attain heaven and if you gain victory, you will enjoy the kingdom. Thus a righteous warfare will abound with welfare both here and hereafter. So you should be prepared to wage the war because it is the only panacea against the incorrigible."

'Tasmāduttiṣṭha kaunteya yuddhāya kṛtaniścayaḥ—Here Lord Kṛṣṇa by addressing Arjuna as Kaunteya wants to remind him of the message to wage the war sent by his mother when He went to the Kauravas with a proposal of treaty. Therefore he should rise to the occasion with full determination.

Arjuna was determined not to fight and Lord Kṛṣṇa in the third verse of this chapter ordered him to rise to the occasion. Here, Arjuna is in a dilemma whether to wage the war or not. So Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorts him to be determined to fight without having any doubt.

Here it seems that Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to say that every one should discharge his duty very sincerely and enthusiastically to the best of his power and ability in whatever circumstances he is placed. Humanity demands it.

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ ३८ ॥

sukhaduḥkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau
tato yuddhāya yujyasva naivaṁ pāpamavāpsyasi

Treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, engage yourself in the battle. Thus fighting you will incur no sin. 38

Comment:

[Arjuna was thinking that by killing his kinsmen he would incur sin. So here Lord Kṛṣṇa clarifies that it is not the war but desire which induces a man to incur sin. So by renouncing desire he should be engaged in the war].

'Sukhaduḥkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau tato yuddhāya yujyasva'— In the war a man either gains victory or suffers defeat. Victory results in gain while defeat results in loss. The worldly people view gain with pleasure and loss with pain. But your aim is not to be tossed about by victory and defeat, gain and loss, and pleasure and pain but your aim is to discharge your duty by treating the agreeable and the disagreeable alike. By doing so you will incur no sin viz., you will be free from bondage.

Every one should discharge his duty earnestly and eifficiently whether he has a desire or not for its fruit. By refusing to be affected by favourable and unfavourable circumstances, the mind becomes steady. So treating the two alike one should discharge one's duty. Moreover one should not performan action for pleasure and refrain from another for fear of its pain. The scriptures should be the authority in deciding what ought to be done and what ought not to be done (Gītā 16/24).

'Naivaṁ pāpamavāpsyasi'—Here the word sin has been used both for sin and virtue. The former leads to the bondage of hell and the latter to the bondage of heaven. Both of them deprive a man of salvation and enable him to follow the cycle of birth and death. So Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna to discharge his duty of waging the war by being even-minded. This will help him to escape the bondage of sin and virtue.

Something Note-Worthy regarding this Section

In this section of eight verses from the thirty-first to the thirty-eighth Lord Kṛṣṇa has emphasized several marvellous facts:—

(i) While delivering a discourse or explaining a subject the beginning should deal with the positive aspect the middle with the negative aspect and the conclusion should again deal with the positive aspect. In this context also Lord Kṛṣṇa in the thirty-first and thirty-second verses explains the favourable consequences of discharging the duty; in the middle from the thirty-third to the thirty-sixth verses He explains the adverse consequences of not performing the duty; and again concludes in the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth verses by explaining the favourable consequences of discharging the duty and orders Arjuna to discharge his duty.

(ii) In these verses Lord Kṛṣṇa has also clarified the doubts arising in the mind of Arjuna. For example Arjuna says, "I don't foresee any good ensuing from the slaughter of kinsmen" (1/31). Lord Kṛṣṇa replies in 2/31, "There is nothing more welcome to a man of the warrior class than a righteous war." In 1/37 Arjuna says, "How can we, by killing our kinsmen, be happy?" Lord Kṛṣṇa replies in 2/32, "Happy are the Kṣatriyas who get the opportunity of waging such an unsolicited warfare." In 1/44 Arjuna says, "The consequence of the war will lead to hell." In 2/32,37 Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "The war is an open gateway to heaven." In 1/36 Arjuna says, "Sin alone will accrue to us by waging the war and by slaying them." Lord Kṛṣṇa replies in 2/33 "If you don't wage such a righteous war and abandon your duty, you will incur sin." In 1/40 Arjuna says, "The result of the war will be that impiety will take hold of the entire family." Lord Kṛṣṇa in 2/33 says, "If you don't wage such a righteous war, you will abandon your duty viz., righteousness.'

(iii) In 2/5 Arjuna insists and says, "It is better to live on alms than to wage the war." Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa in 2/38 orders him to wage the war. Uddhava had a desire

to live with Lord Kṛṣṇa. So Lord Kṛṣṇa ordered him to go to the Northern Mountains and do penance there (Śrīmadbhāgavata 11/29/41). It means that desire of any type is an obstacle to salvation.

(iv) In these verses Lord Kṛṣṇa has explained in details some of the things which were explained in brief in the second and third verses of this chapter. For example there the expression 'Anāryajuṣṭam' (it is shunned by noble souls) was used, here the expression 'Dharmyāddhi yuddhāccchreyo'nyat' (any other thing more welcome than a righteous war) has been used. There the term 'Asvargyam' (not leading to heaven) was used, here the expression 'Svargadvāramapāvṛtam, (an open gate way to heaven), has been used. There the term 'Akīrtikaram' not bringing fame was used, here the expression 'Akīrtim cāpi bhūtāni kathayiṣyanti te'vyayām' (all creatures will even recount your undying infamy) has been used. There Lord Kṛṣṇa ordered Arjuna to fight by using the expression 'Tyaktvottṣtha paraṁtapa' here also He orders him to fight by using the expression 'Tato yuddhāya yujyasva'.

Link:–The Lord in the next two verses permits Arjuna to be guided by even-mindedness already mentioned in the preceding verse and he describes it glory.

एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये
बुद्धिर्योगे त्विमां शृणु ।
बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ
कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ॥ ३९ ॥

eṣā te'bhihitā sāṅkhye buddhiryoge tvimāṁ śṛṇu
buddhyā yukto yayā pārtha karmabandhaṁ prahāsyasi

O Pārtha (Arjuna), this attitude of mind has been presented to you from the point of view of Jñānayoga (Discipline of Knowledge); now hear the same as presented from the point of view of Karmayoga (the Discipline of Selfless-Action). Equipped with this state of mind, you will be able to shake off completely the shackles of Karma (Action). 39

Comment:

'Eṣā te'bhihitā sāṅkhye buddhiryoge tvimāṁ śṛṇu'—Here the word 'Tu' (indeed) has been used to show that now there is the description of the Discipline of Action which is different from the Discipline of Knowledge.

The term 'Eṣā' has been used for equanimity which has been described in the preceding verse and which has already been explained in the Discipline of Knowledge (From the eleventh to the thirtieth verses). When a man discriminates between the body and the soul, he gets established in equanimity automatically because it is attachment to the body which is an obstacle in the way of equanimity. So this ideal of equanimity has already been presented from the point of view of 'Sāṅkhyayoga' (Discipline of Knowledge); now listen to a discourse on equanimity in the context of 'Karmayoga' (Discipline of Action).

'Imām' (this) term has been used to explain how this equanimity is attained by the Discipline of Action and what its importance is.

'Buddhyā yukto yayā pārtha karmabandhaṁ prahāsyasi'—Arjuna was afraid of the sin that would accrue by waging the war (1/36, 45). But Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that sin does not accrue by waging the war as it is your duty but it accrues by having attachment and aversion. So if you attain equanimity, no sin will accrue and yourduty

of waging the war will not lead you to bondage.

In the seventh verse of this chapter Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa to tell him what was good for him. Hence Lord Kṛṣṇa answers his query. First He mentioned the means of Sāṅkhyayoga (Discipline of Knowledge) and then laid great stress on performance of duty and told him that there was nothing more welcome to a Kṣatriya than a righteous war (2/31). Then He told him that no sin would accrue, if he had equanimity (2/38). Now He explains the same equanimity in the context of 'Karmayoga' (Discipline of Action).

A Karmayogī performs action in order to set an example to the masses (Gītā 3/20) without any selfish motive. By doing so he attains equanimity easily. Having attained equanimity he is easily liberated from the bondage of actions.

This (Thirty-ninth) verse should have been placed after the thirtieth verse as it rightly belongs there because from the eleventh verse to the thirtieth verse the Lord explained even-mindedness from the view of the Discipline of Knowledge and now He describes it from the view of the Discipline of Action. So it seems that it is improper to insert these eight verses, from the thirty-first to the thirty-eighth here. But actually it is not so. The reason is that before describing equanimity in the Discipline of Action, it is necessary to describe what one ought to do and what one ought not to do. It was Arjuna's duty to wage the righteous war. It was not his duty to abandon war because by doing so he would incur sin. So Lord Kṛṣṇa in these eight verses described what Arjuna ought to do and what he ought not to do (2/31-38). Then he explained equanimity. It means that first from the eleventh verse to the thirtieth verse he explained equanimity through the description of the real and the unreal by mentioning that the real is real and the unreal is unreal and no one can change them. Then from the thirty-first verse to the thirty-eighth verse, having explained the topic of what one ought to do and what one ought not to do, from the thirty-ninth verse He enhorts Arjuna never to desist from his duty but always perform his duty with even-mindedness in success and failure.

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।
स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥ ४० ॥

nehābhikramanāśo'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate
svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt

In this path (of disinterested action) there is no loss of effort, nor is there any adverse result. Even a little practice of this discipline protects one from great fear (of birth and death). 40

Comment:

[Lord Kṛṣṇa has explained the importance of disinterested action in the latter part of the thirty-ninth and this fortieth verse in four ways:—(i) By it, one becomes free from shackles of actions. (ii) There is no loss of effort. (iii) There is no adverse result. (iv) Even a little practice of it protects one from great fear].

'Nehābhikramanāśo'sti'—In this path of disinterested action there is no loss of attempt viz., the partial practice of this Yoga (Discipline of Disinterested Action) has its corresponding benefit. The desire to attain equanimity is the beginning of equanimity. Such a beginning never gets extinct because desire for attaining the real is also real.

'Iha' (in this) means that in this world human beings are authorized to attain equanimity. All other bodies (births) are to enjoy worldly pains and pleasures, there is no opportunity for them to do away with attachment and aversion because pleasures can be enjoyed only by having attachment

and aversion. If there are no attachment and aversion, no pleasure can be enjoyed and thus the actions will lead to spiritual discipline.

'Pratyavāyo na vidyate'—The actions which are performed with a desire for fruits can give adverse result, if there is any error in the pronunciation of incantations or in performing sacrifice etc. Suppose a man performs sacrifice for the birth of a son, but if it is not performed according to the scriptures, it may result in the death of a member of the family instead of blessing him with a son. Sometime if the result is not quite contrary, it may be less harmful as the son may be born crippled. But one who performs actions without having any desire for fruits, becomes equanimous and so there is no adverse result of his effort.

What is adverse result ? Unevenness of mind is the adverse result. Attachment and aversion is uneven-mindedness. This uneven-mindedness leads to the cycle of birth and death. But when a man becomes equnimous, attachment and aversion are rooted out and on annihilation of attachment and aversion, there is no unevenness of mind and therefore the adverse result is out of the question.

'Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt'—Even a little practice of this discipline of disinterested action which brings about equanimity protects one from the great fear of birth and death and unlike the action for fruits, which ends after giving fruits, it does not perish viz., its fruit is not wealth or property which is perishable. The equanimity which a striver attains by facing favourable and unfavourable circumstances, gets fixed in him and becomes permanent. A devotee (striver) deviating from the path of Yoga, having enjoyed the heavenly pleasures for many years and having taken birth in the houses of righteous persons, does not lose the knowledge or even-mindedness gained in his previous birth (Gītā 6/40-45) because this knowledge or even-mindedness is real.

'Dharma' (Duty) is used in two senses (i) Charity viz., kindness in giving help (money, food, clothes etc.,) to the poor and suffering people (ii) Discharging one's duty according to the ordinance of the scriptures. By performing one's duty without desiring its fruits, one develops equanimity automatically because it is axiomatic. Therefore, here equanimity has been called 'Dharma' (duty).

Something Note-Worthy about Equanimity

People have formed an opinion that there is no use of constant remembrance of God unless there is concentration of mind. But the gospel of the Gītā does not attach much importance to this opinion, it attaches importance to equanimity. According to the Gītā the striver who has attained equanimity is an exalted soul. Even when a man is imbued with all qualities, if he does not gain equanimity, according to the Gītā, he can't be called a perfect soul.

This equanimity is of two kinds—of the mind and of the self. The Lord pervades every where equally. One who gets oneself established in Him, gains victory over the world and is liberated.

But this equanimity of the self can be known by equanimity of the mind (Gītā 5/19). Equanimity of the mind consists in remaining even-minded in success and failure (Gītā 2/48). Such a person remains even-minded in praise and reproach, success and failure, profit and loss, pleasure and pain etc., (Gītā 5/20). This sort of equanimity never perishes and it results in nothing but salvation.

Whatever virtuous actions such as penance, charity and pilgrimage etc., are performed by a man, they perish after giving their fruits, but equanimity does not perish and it leads the man to salvation or God-Realization (Gītā 5/3) while concentration of mind may lead him to accomplishments but not to salvation.

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains to Arjuna how to attain equanimity.

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।
बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ।। ४१ ।।

vyavasāyātmikā buddhirekeha kurunandana
bahuśākhā hyanantāśca buddhayo'vyavasāyināṁ

O Joy of the Kurus, in this blessed path, the intellect is determinate and one-pointed, whereas the intellect of the undecided (infirm) is scattered in many directions and is endlessly diverse. 41

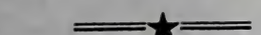
Comment:

'Vyavasāyātmikā buddhirekeha kurunandana'—To the seeker of God-Realization the intellect is determinate and pointed viz., he has only one decision and that is to attain equanimity in the form of God-Realization. Attachment to the world is the main obstacle to this attainment of equanimity and that can be removed through determinate intellect.

Why is determinate intellect one? The reason is that in it there is renunciation of the desire for worldly objects etc. This renunciation of desire is one whether it pertains to wealth and riches or honour and praise. But there are objects of different types and a person wants to acquire them. Just as there are different kinds of objects such as different kinds of sweets, in the same way there are endless desires to acquire numerous objects of various types in numerous ways. Therefore, a desirous person can't have one intellect.

In the Discipline of Action (in this verse) and in the Discipline of Devotion (in 9/30) there is mention of intellect which is determinate and pointed but it is not so in the Discipline of Knowledge. The reason is that in the Discipline of Knowledge one comes to know the self first and then his intellect becomes determinate and pointed, while in the Discipline of Action as well as Devotion, there is a decision followed by knowledge of the self. Therefore in the Discipline of Knowledge there is importance of knowledge while in the Disciplines of Devotion and Action there is importance of single-minded pursuit.

'Bahuśākhā hyanantāśca buddhayo'vyavasāyināṁ—The infirminmind being desire-ridden clings to pleasures and prosperity and so the intellect of such persons branch out endlessly. For example they have a desire to get a son and the means adopted for the fulfilment of the desire such as medicine, incantation, oblation and blessings of a saint etc., are the branches of the same desire. Similarly a man wants to get money—this is one desire (intellect) and business, service, theft, robbery, cheating etc., are many branches of that intellect. Such a man with endless desires having many branches can't even take the decision about God-Realization.



Link:–The ways of the infirm-in-mind (worldly people) have been described in the next three verses.

यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।
वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीति वादिनः ।। ४२ ।।
कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् ।
क्रियाविशेषबहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ।। ४३ ।।

yāmimāṁ puṣpitāṁ vācaṁ pravadantyavipaścitaḥ
vedavādaratāḥ pārtha nānyadastīti vādinaḥ

kāmātmānaḥ svargaparā janmakarmaphalapradām
kriyāviśeṣabahulāṁ bhogaiśvaryagatiṁ prati

Arjuna, those who are obsessed by desires, who look upon heaven as the supreme goal and argue that there is nothing beyond heaven & pleasures and who are devoted to the letter of the Vedas, are unwise. They utter flowery speech recommending many acts of various kinds for the attainment of pleasure and prosperity with rebirth as their fruit. 42–43

Comment:

'Kāmātmānaḥ'—Desire-ridden are those whose sole aim in life is to hunt after enjoyments. They think that it is nothing but desire which inspires a man to action and without it a man is stone dead. Moreover they identify themselves with desires.

But the fact is that a man himself is a fragment of God and thus, is eternal while desires are fleating and they increase and decrease. The self and desire are totally distinct. But desire-ridden people never realize this distinction but it is only out of delusion that they identify themselves with desires.

'Svargaparā'—They look upon heaven and its pleasures as their supreme goal and all their efforts are directed towards this base end. Here the term 'Svargaparā' refers to such men who have faith and belief in heaven etc., as described in the Vedas and Scriptures.

'Vedavādaratāḥ pārtha nānyadastīti vādinaḥ'—They are interested in the Vedas only for the sake of their ritualistic portions, which deal with the earthly and heavenly pleasures. The aim of their life is to enjoy celestial pleasures here and hereafter rather than to attain God-Realization or emancipation.

'Yāmimāṁ puṣpitāṁ vācaṁ pravadantyavipaścitaḥ'—They can't discriminate between the real and the unreal, the perishable and the imperishable. Such unwise persons utter flowery speech of the Vedas, which describes and recommends various acts for the attainment of pleasures and prosperity.

Here the word 'Puṣpitām' has been used to show that speech is just flowery with an attractive appearance without bearing any permanent fruit. Satisfaction comes out of fruit only, not from flowers and leaves.

'Janmakarmaphalapradām'— That flowery speech instead of giving any permanent and eternal fruit gives fruit which prolongs the wheel of birth. In the flowery speech importance is attached to pleasures and attachment to pleasures is the cause of birth (Gītā 13/21).

'Kriyāviśeṣabahulāṁ bhogaiśvaryagatiṁ prati'—That flowery speech deals with a number of rituals for the attainment of pleasure and prosperity. In these rituals there is abundance of different kinds of rites involving various methods, various actions, objects and strenuous physical labour (Gītā 18/24).

भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम् ।
व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥ ४४ ॥

bhogaiśvaryaprasaktānāṁ tayāpahṛtacetasām
vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ samādhau na vidhīyate

Those whose minds are carried away by such flowery speech (who are attracted towards pleasures and who are deeply attached to pleasure and prosperity, can't attain the determinate intellect concentrated on God. 44

Comment:

'Tayāpahṛtacetasām'—Their minds are carried away by such flowery speech that there is a great pleasure in heaven—there are celestial damsels, there is a blissful garden and there is nectar etc.

'Bhogaiśvaryaprasaktānām'—Pleasures of five senses—sound, touch, colour, taste, smell, comfort to the body, and desire for respect and praise are 'Bhoga' (the worldly enjoyments). Accumulation of money and material to enjoy those worldly pleasures is called 'Aiśvarya' (prosperity). Those who cling to pleasures and prosperity are called 'Bhogaiśvarya prasaktānām.' Such people are called demoniacal* (Asura). In Saṁskṛta 'Asu' stands for life breath and he who wants to maintain life breath is a 'Asura'.

'Vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ samādhau na vidhīyate'—Such type of people who instinctively cling to pleasures and prosperity can't attain the determinate intellect to realize God because their intellect has become impure. Similarly the people who have pride of their being learned by acquiring the worldly art or science or knowledge etc., can't attain the determinate intellect (decision) to realize God.

Something Note-Worthy

All gracious God by His grace has bestowed discrimination upon human beings so that they may attain God or salvation. But human beings giving cold shoulder to this discrimination cling to pleasures like birds and animals. They forget that enjoyment of pleasures is not the goal of human life but its supreme object is the attainment of perfection and all the circumstances whether favourable or unfavourable they are placed in, are the means to attain perfection (God-Realization). So they can't have the sole desire for God-Realization.

The fact is that the worldly pleasures and objects are not the real obstacles to God-Realization, but attachment to them is the main hindrance. So long as this attachment continues, not to talk of God-Realization the people can't even make up their minds to attain God because their minds are drawn away by worldly pleasures and prosperity etc.

Link:–To confirm something it is necessary that one should view the pros and cons of the matter. In the previous three verses there is the description of the infirm-in-mind who are obsessed by desires. Now Lord Kṛṣṇa inspires Arjuna to attain the ideal by being established in the Eternal Existence (God), transcending the three Guṇas (Attributes), and being free from all desires.

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥ ४५ ॥

traiguṇyaviṣayā vedā nistraiguṇyo bhavārjuna
nirdvandvo nityasattvastho niryogakṣema ātmavān

O Arjuna, the Vedas deal with the three Guṇas (Attributes) and their evolutes. Be free from those attributes, rise above the pairs of opposites, remain balanced, be unconcerned about the supply of wants and preservation of what has been already attained and get established in the self. 45

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* The people possessing the mode of passion who are being described here have been called people possessing demoniacal traits in the sixteenth chapter by the Lord (16/11,16/16).

Comment:

'Traiguṇyaviṣayā vedā—Here the Vedas have been used for the ritualistic portions of the Vedas which deal with the three Guṇas (Attributes) and their evolutes in the form of worldly and heavenly enjoyments. Here the purpose is not to censure the Vedas but it is to glorify the selfless spirit. In reference to the diamond and the piece of glass, the aim is to eulogize the dimond, rather than to censure the piece of glass. The Vedas don't only mention the means to satisfy desires of the worldly minded people but they also contain sublime and elevating ideas on God and the means to realize Him.

'Nistraiguṇyo bhavārjuna'—O Arjuṇa, be free from the evolutes of these attributes viz., be free from the worldly enjoyments as well as the means of attaining such enjoyments.

'Nirdvandvaḥ'— For a striver to transcend the worldly enjoyments it is inevitable to be free from the pairs of opposites such as attachment and aversion etc., because they are his real enemies and they are the stumbling block in his spiritual progress (Gītā 3/34).*

Here Lord Kṛṣṇa orders Arjuna to rise above the pairs of opposites because through their deluding mature human beings are enveloped in utter ignorance (Gītā 7/27). When a striver gets rid of this delusion, he can worship Him with a firm resolve (Gītā 7/28). By transcending these pairs of opposites he is easily freed from bondage (5/3), he becomes undeluded (15/5) and he is not bound (4/22). So the Lord wants him to be free from the pairs of opposites.

Another thing is that if a person develops attachment for one person or a thing, he is sure to develop aversion to other persons or things. By having such attachment to the world an aspirant turns indifferent to God. This indifference is a sort of aversion to God. But if he develops true devotion to God, without having any attachment or aversion to the world, he develops total disinclination for it.

This total disinclination has three stages. In the first stage the aspirant has no hatred for unfavourable circumstances but there is 'Upekṣā, in the second stage there is 'Udāsīnatā' (unconcernedness) while in the third stage there is total disinclination. In the last stage (total disinclination) attachment and aversion are totally wiped out. If this process is considered minutely, we find that in 'Upekṣā' there remain impressions of attachment and aversion, in 'Udāsīnatā' the feelings of attachment and aversion remain while in total disinclination there are neither impressions nor feelings of attachment and aversion. In this state attachment and aversion are totally wiped out.

'Nityasattvasthaḥ'—The means to rise above the pairs of opposites is to get established in the omnipresent and ever lasting God.

'Niryogakṣema'† —Don't have the desire even for the provision of the means required (Yoga) and the preservation of what has already been attained, because I provide for and preserve all for those who have exclusive devotion for me‡ (Gītā 9/22).

'Ātmavān'—Having the aim of God-Realization, get established in the self (Eternal Existence or God).

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains what one achieves by transcending the three Guṇas (Attributes).

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* 'Dvandva' (Dualism) means having opposite feelings for something as the feelings of attachment and aversion, pleasure and pain etc., for the world. This duality misleads an aspirant to bondage.

† 'Yoga' means providing unacquired things and 'Kṣema' means preservation of the things procured.

‡ Though here it is the context of the Discipline of Disinterested Action, yet it seems proper to take it as the Discipline of Devotion because Lord Kṛṣṇa, time and again, orders Arjuna to be His devotee and He also accepts him as His devotee in 4/3. He also takes the responsibility of provision and protection (9/22).

यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतः सम्प्लुतोदके ।
तावान्सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥ ४६ ॥

yāvānartha udapāne sarvataḥ samplutodake
tāvānsarveṣu vedeṣu brāhmaṇasya vijānataḥ

A Brāhmaṇa, who has obtained enlightenment, has the same use for all the Vedas as one has for a small reservoir of water in a place flooded with water on all sides. 46

Comment:

'Yāvānartha udapāne sarvataḥ samplutodake'—A small reservoir of water is useful in a place where there is no other source of water. But no body ever pays any attention to such a reservoir of water in a locality submerged with pure water. Moreover that small reservoir of water becomes dirty and impure and can't be used for drinking purpose after washing and bathing in it. But the water of a large stream remains clean and pure even after washing and bathing in it.

'Tāvānsarveṣu vedeṣu brāhmaṇasya vijānataḥ'—Likewise oblations, charities, penances and pilgrimages etc., mentioned in the Vedas are of use to those who are still ignorant. But they become meaningless to the illumined souls who have realized God. The same kind of comparison has been made in the seventieth verse that the emancipated souls are like the sea, as several rivers fall into it but its magnitude remains the same, similarly the illumined souls remain undisturbed though several kinds of pleasures and enjoyments merge themselves into them.

The great soul who possesses knowledge of the Lord, the Vedas and the scriptures is called 'Brāhmaṇasya vijānataḥ.'

By using the term 'Tāvān' Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that the great soul after realizing God transcends the three attributes (modes), rises above the pairs of opposites viz., becomes free from attachment and aversion, gets established in the self and remains unconcerned about provision and preservation. He always remains devoted to God.

—★—

Link:—In the thirty-ninth verse Lord Kṛṣṇa ordered Arjuna to listen to the discourse on evenness of mind. Now in the next verse He orders him to perform his duty in order to attain that equanimity (evenness of mind).

✓ कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ ४७ ॥

karmaṇyevādhikāraste mā phaleṣu kadācana
mā karmaphalaheturbhūrmā te saṅgo'stvakarmaṇi

Your right is to perform your duty only, but never lay claim to its fruit. Let not the fruit of action be your object, nor let your attachment be to inaction. 47

Comment:

'Karmaṇyevādhikāraste'— Your right is to perform your duty, you are free in it because no other bodies as those of animals and birds etc., are free to perform new actions. Only human beings are eligible to perform new actions. The gods can perform new actions and can bestow money and material upon human beings according to the ordinance of the Lord but they are too voluptuous to perform new actions. They are destined only to reap the fruit of their meritorious

deeds. The creatures in hells also can't perform new actions, they suffer the fruits of their actions. God has bestowed this human birth, the very last of all births so that by performing new actions in the form of selfless service to others, the man may achieve salvation and be free from the bondage of the cycle of birth and death. If he remains engaged in selfish actions, it will result in bondage. In case he is given to indolence and heedlessness, he will follow the cycle of birth and death. Therefore, the Lord advises human beings to render selfless services for the common good.

The term 'Karmaṇi' has been used in singular number to emphasize the fact that though man has to perform several duties in his life, he can perform only one at a particular time. Arjuna as a man of the warrior class has several duties such as fighting, generosity and bravery etc., but at present he can perform only one of them—to wage the war.

A Vital Fact

In all the other births i.e., those of birds, animals, insects and even gods the creatures can reap the fruits of their actions but can't perform new actions. But there are two things about human life viz., reaping the fruits of the deeds of earlier lives and performing new ones. God has bestowed upon him this human body so that by performing new virtuous actions without having a desire for their fruits, he may attain God-Realization or salvation. As far as the fruit of his previous actions is concerned, it may come in the form of favourable and unfavourable circumstances. He can't change those circumstances but can make proper use of them and they can lead him to salvation, if he uses them properly.

An important fact which needs attention is that favourable or unfavourable circumstances can't make a man happy or sad. It is merely his ignorance which makes him happy or sad because he identifies himself with those circumstances and thus becomes the experiencer of happiness or sadness. But if he gives a serious thought, he will come to know that the external circumstances can't make his internal self either happy or sad. He should make proper use of the favourable circumstances by serving others and of the undesirable ones by renouncing the desire to enjoy pleasures.

In unfavourable circumstances a man should not be perturbed but should think that the sins which were committed to get pleasures are perishing in the form of unfavourable circumstances and this thought is a kind of repentance for the sins committed. Secondly it is a fore-warning to us that we shall have to face adverse consequences if we commit sins again. So we should perform actions for the welfare of all creatures, rather than for our own pleasures.

For insects, birds and animals etc., the fruit of past actions and also the present actions are only to work out their destinies. But in case of human beings the fruit of past actions and also the present activities are the means for salvation.

'Mā phaleṣu kadācana'-Don't lay claim to the fruit of action because you are not free in getting it, it is dispensed by the Lord. If you perform actions with a desire for fruits, you will get bound (Gītā 5/12). It is the desire for fruits which makes a person an agent for actions. With the melting away of desire, the sense of doership is gone. Obliteration of the sense of doership does not lead a man to bondage. It means that a man is much more entangled in desires.*

Secondly all the actions are performed with the help of the worldly objects and persons. So it is dishonest to desire the fruits of those actions for one's own self.

The desire for fruit of actions is not benficial for human beings. 'Never lay claim to its fruit'—this expression proves that it is

* Actually God-Realization does not depend on actions but on feelings and knowledge because He is ever attained. It is the desire for fruits which is an obstacle to God-Realization.

upto a man whether he lays claim to the fruit of an action or not. He is free in this respect. The term 'Phaleṣu' has been used in the plural because a man by performing an action desires several fruits such as riches, regard and reputation etc.

The means to be free from the desire for fruits of actions are as follows—(i) Desire causes a feeling of something lacking. Its fulfilment makes one a slave. Its non-fulfilment causes suffering. The pleasure derived out of fulfilment of desire gives birth to new desires and a man goes on getting interested in performing new actions in order to reap their fruit. By understanding this fact in the right perspective a man becomes free from the desire for fruit of actions.

(ii) Actions have a beginning and an end, they are not eternal. So how can their fruits be eternal? But the self is eternal. How can the eternal get any benefit from the perishable? By understanding this fact he becomes detached from the world and attains God-Realization.

In order to be free from the desire for fruits of actions an aspirant should have discrimination as well as the feelings to serve others. Discrimination will be helpful to a striver in renouncing his comforts, while the feelings of service to others will enable him to do good to others. By doing so a striver can follow the Discipline of Disinterested Action in the right sense.

'Mā karmaphalaheturbhūḥ'—Let the fruits of action not be your object. It means that you should not have the least attachment for the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., because attachment for them will make you responsible for the fruit of action. In the eleventh verse of the fifth chapter also Lord Kṛṣṇa by using the term 'Kevalaiḥ' (only) wants to say that the follower of the Discipline of Disinterested Action should abandon attachment for the body, mind, intellect and senses.

If a striver becomes the agent (doer) of a virtuous action even without having a desire for its fruit, he is held responsible for the fruit of the action, because by doing so he has accepted his affinity for the mind, intellect and senses etc., which are unreal. Actually we have no affinity with them, they have their affinity for the world. When anybody else performs an action for the good of others we don't accept our affinity for the action and its fruit and so are not held responsible. We should adopt the same attitude in the case of our own actions also, so that we may not be held responsible for the fruit of actions.

'Mā te saṅgo'stvakarmaṇi'—Let your attachment not be to inaction, because by leaning towards inaction you will become lazy and idle, and like the desire for fruit it will also mislead you to bondage. The reason is that indolence and prolonged sleep etc., also give pleasure viz., Tāmasika joy, (Gītā 18/39) which misleads either to the lower births of insects, birds and beasts etc., or to infernal regions (Gītā 14/18). It means that attachment misleads to bondage and is the cause of birth in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21).

You should not be attached to inaction by thinking that it will lead you to progress here and hereafter, because the real essence is beyond action or inaction.

In this verse the Lord means to say that a striver should remain detached from objects, men, action, incidents, circumstances and physical, subtle causal bodies etc., without having the least affinity to them.

In this verse there are four points which need attention—

(i) Your right is to perform your duty (action) only. (ii) Never lay claim to its fruit. (iii) Let the fruit of action not be your object. (iv) Let your attachment not be to inaction. Out of these four points the first and the fourth have the same theme because both of them lay emphasis on the performance of duty or action. Similarly the second and the third points have the same theme because in both of them it is mentioned that you should not desire the fruit of action.

It means that by leaning towards inaction you will have affinity to Tāmasika temperament such as idleness and laziness. By having attachment for action and its fruit you will have affinity for Rājasika temperament. But when a striver is free from

laziness, idleness, actions, fruit of actions, etc., he gets the joy born of knowledge and light and having attachment for it he has affinity to Sāttvika temperament. Affinity with them is the cause of birth and death. Therefore, a striver should not have attachment for either of them. Doing one's duty without having any attachment to them is called the Discipline of Disinterested Action.

Link:–After ordering Arjuna to perform his duty in the preceding verse, now the Lord describes how he should remain even-minded while performing actions.

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ ४८ ॥

yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhanañjaya
siddhyasiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga ucyate

O Dhanañjaya (the conqueror of wealth), perform actions (duties) being fixed in Yoga, renouncing attachment, having become even-minded in success and failure; equanimity (equilibrium) is called Yoga. 48

Comment:

'Saṅgaṁ tyaktvā'—You can become indifferent only if you have no attachment for actions, their fruits; place, time, incidents, circumstances, bodies and minds etc., which belong to Matter because without being indifferent to the actions, they cannot lead you to salvation.

'Siddhyasiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā'—Renunciation of attachment will result in evenness of mind. A man should be even-minded in favourable and unfavourable circumstances, honour and dishonour, praise and reproach.*

A follower of the Discipline of Disinterested Action should be so even-minded while performing actions that he should not bother for their accomplishment or non-accomplishment, for getting its fruit or not, for getting salvation or not. He should remain devoted to his duty. If an aspirant has not realized detachment and equanimity, he should aim at evenness of mind. By having this sort of approach, striver will attain equanimity finally which will result in God-Realization or Self-Realization (2/53).

'Yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi'—Lord Kṛṣṇa says that the essence of true Yoga lies in even-mindedness in the midst of success as well as failure. The person who ever keeps the mind in the poised state is called steadfast in Yoga. The sameness of mind should remain in tact from the beginning of an action to its end. It should not be a temporary phase otherwise the propensities of attraction and repulsion will go on springing up. We should never allow such propensities to develop.

'Samatvaṁ yoga ucyate'—Yoga is nothing but equanimity i.e., equanimity is the embodiment of Lord Himself. Further in the nineteenth verse of the fifth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa will say, " Those whose mind is established in equanimity have conquered the mortal plane because Brahma (the Absolute) is flawless and equanimous, hence they are established in the Eternal."

Here Yoga has been defined as equanimity while in the twenty-third verse of the sixth chapter it will be defined as the state which is free from the contact of pain. Actually both the definitions are the same. When a man

* While explaining this verse Śrī Śankarācārya writes—O Dhanañjaya, being established in Yoga perform actions only for God without even having the desire to please Him. Knowledge gained by purification of mind as a result of the desireless (without the desire for fruits) actions is called 'Siddhi' (Success) and whatever is contrary to it (lack of knowledge) is 'Asiddhi' (Failure). Perform actions being even-minded amidst success or failure. This evenness of mind or equanimity is called 'Yoga.'

suffers from ring-worm or itching eczema, he gets pleasure by scratching it. The pleasure of itching is followed by the painful sensation of burning. Being the result of a disease both these sensations are really painful. Similarly the pleasure and pain received out of the attachment to the world are equally painful. Therefore, Yoga can either be defined as the state free from the contact of pain viz., free from pleasure and pain or equanimity in pleasure and pain; both are the same.

It means that all the actions performed by physical, subtle and causal bodies should render service to the world without having any selfish motive. This alone will lead to equanimity.

Something Note-Worthy about Intellect and Equanimity

Intellect is of two kinds–indeterminate and determinate. The intellect of those whose aim is to enjoy worldly pleasures and prosperity is indeterminate (Gītā 2/44) while the intellect of those whose aim is equanimity and salvation is determinate. Indeterminate intellects are endlessly diverse while the determinate one is single. Those whose intellects are endlessly diverse, are themselves undecided (Gītā 2/41) and are worldly. But those whose intellect is single, have rightly resolved (Gītā 9/30) and they are strivers.

Equanimity is of two kinds—of the mind and of the self. To remain even in favourable or unfavourable circumstances without having any attachment or aversion is equanimity of the mind while equanimity of the self is union with God or spiritual illumination (2/53).

There is a distinction between the worldly people and the strivers. The goal of the worldly people is to enjoy pleasure and prosperity and their intellects are not determinate but are scattered in many directions and are endlessly diverse. On the other hand the striver's intellects are determinate and the strivers in their practical life maintain equanimity in success and failure, profit and loss, and favourable and unfavourable circumstances without having attachment and aversion. Such strivers conquer the mortal plane and are established in the Eternal (Gītā 5/19).

Link:–Now in the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the superiority of equanimity (which has been described from the thirty-ninth verse to the forty-eighth verse) to a motivated action viz., action with a selfish motive.

दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनञ्जय ।
बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥ ४९ ॥

dūreṇa hyavaraṁ karma buddhiyogāddhanañjaya
buddhau śaraṇamanviccha kṛpaṇāḥ phalahetavaḥ

O Dhanañjaya, action with a selfish motive is far inferior to that performed with equanimity of mind. Seek refuge in this evenness of mind, for wretched are those who crave for fruit of action. 49

Comment:

'Dūreṇa hyavaraṁ karma buddhiyogāt'—Action with a selfish motive is far inferior to that performed with equanimity of mind. Actions have a beginning and an end and the connection with their fruits is also temporary. We get associated and dissociated with them. But Yoga (equanimity) is eternal, it never deserts us, it suffers no change. Therefore selfish action is much inferior to equanimity.

Actions without equanimity mislead to pain as well as the cycle of birth and death because they have no power to lead to salvation, Equanimity is an art to naturalize actions. If there is no equanimity, one will

develop one's egoism and attachment to the body. This sort of egoism and attachment is beastly. In the Bhāgavata sage Śukadeva says to king Parīkṣit, 'O king, renounce this beastly nature which is causing fear of death in you' (12/5/2).

'Dūreṇa'—As light is the contrary of darkness, an action performed with equanimity of mind is contrary to the action performed with a selfish motive, because an action performed with equanimity leads to God-Realization while motivated actions mislead to the wheel of birth and death.

'Buddhau śaraṇamanviccha'—Seek refuge in this evenness of mind viz., remain established in this evenness of mind which will enable you to realize yourself.

'Kṛpaṇāḥ phalahetavaḥ'—It is very wretched to crave for fruit of action. To accept one's affinity for actions, fruits of actions and bodies etc., means to crave for fruit of action. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa in the forty-seventh verse exhorts Arjuna not to have the fruit of action as his object.

The eternal substance is different from perishable actions and the fruits of actions. What can be more ignoble than this that the eternal substance should be subservient to the perishable fruit of action?

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the result of equanimity of mind.

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।
तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ।। ५० ।।

buddhiyukto jahātīha ubhe sukṛtaduṣkṛte
tasmādyogāya yujyasva yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam

Endowed with equanimity, one frees oneself in this life from good (virtue) and evil (vice) alike; therefore, devote yourself to this yoga of equanimity; skill in actions lies in (the practice of this) Yoga. 50

Comment:

'Buddhiyukto jahātīha ubhe sukṛtaduṣkṛte'—The person endowed with equanimity becomes free from virtues and vices like omnipresent God (Gītā 2/38).

In the state of equanimity a man while living in the world detaches himself from the world and remains untouched by virtues and sins as a lotus leaf by water.

The man himself is sentient and is free from virtue and sin but by identifying himself with the unreal body etc., sins and virtues accrue. If he does not identify himself with the unreal, he will remain untouched by virtues and sins just like ether.

'Tasmādyogāya yujyasva'—Therefore, devote yourself to the Yoga of equanimity viz., remain established continuously in equanimity. You can't attain that equanimity so long as you have attachment and aversion. You are the knower of pleasure and pain. It means that you are different from them and you are the onlooker who remains equanimous. So realize that equanimity.

'Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam'—Skill in actions lies in the practice of this Yoga. Equanimity in success and failure is skill in actions.

In this verse Lord Kṛṣṇa has not defined Yoga but he has explained the importance of Yoga (equanimity). If we interpret it as 'skill in actions is Yoga' it means that the action of a thief carried out skilfully will also be called Yoga. Therefore, this interpretation does not seem proper. Other people may define Yoga 'skill in actions approved by the scriptures.' But by doing so the people will be bound by the fruits of actions and will not be able to attain equanimity. Therefore, it is proper to interpret equanimity in actions as skill or wisdom. The reason is that he who remains

even-minded while performing actions is not bound by actions and their fruits.

Secondly in the first part of this verse as well as in the previous two verses there is the reference of Yoga (Equanimity) rather than skill. So this interpretation seems to be reasonable.

Link:–Now the Lord gives examples to substantiate what has been said in the preceding verse.

कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः ।
जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥ ५१ ॥

karmajaṁ buddhiyuktā hi phalaṁ tyaktvā manīṣiṇaḥ
janmabandhavinirmuktāḥ padaṁ gacchantyanāmayam

Wisemen endowed with equanimity, renouncing the fruits of actions, freed from the shackles of births, attain the blissful supreme state. 51

Comment:

'Karmajaṁ buddhiyuktā hi phalaṁ tyaktvā manīṣiṇaḥ'—Those endowed with equanimity are really wise. In the tenth verse of the eighteenth chapter also it is explained that the man who does not hate a disagreeable action nor is attached to an agreeable one, is wise.

An action even without a desire for its fruit will bear fruit. No one can dispense with its fruit. Suppose a farmer sows seed without a selfish motive, will he not get corn ? He will definitely get corn. In the same way if a person works in a detached spirit, he will get its fruit. Therefore renunciation of fruit means renunciation of manifest and latent desires for fruit and attachment for fruit. All people are free and capable of renouncing such desires.

'Janma bandha vinirmuktāḥ'—The wise aspirants endowed with equanimity of mind are freed from the wheel of birth and death because in the state of equanimity they don't in the least, possess evils, such as attachment and aversion etc., which are the root cause of rebirth. Thus they become free from the shackles of birth and death for ever.

'Padaṁ gacchantyanāmayam'—'Āmaya' means ailment. An ailment is a blemish. A thing which is free from all sorts of blemishes is called 'Anāmaya' (spotless). The wise people endowed with equanimity attain the state which is free from any kind of blemish. This state has been called eternal state in the fifth verse of the fifteenth chapter and ever-lasting imperishable state in the fifty-sixth verse of the eighteenth chapter.

Though in the Gītā (in 14/6) Sattva quality (the mode of goodness) has also been called flawless yet in fact, the self or God is flawless because by attaining Him one has not to follow the wheel of birth and death. Lord Krsna has called Sattva quality also flawless because that also helps a man in attaining God-Realization.

Self (Soul) is immutable while the evolutes of Matter (Nature)—body and the world are mutable. When this self (soul) identifies itself with the tainted body, it assumes itself tainted with mulable nature. But when it renounces this assumed identification, it realizes its pure self. This is the blissful supreme state, free from evil.

In this verse the terms 'Buddhiyuktā' and 'Manīṣiṇaḥ' have been used in the plural to express the idea that all those who get established in equanimity undoubtedly attain the blissful supreme state without any exception. It proves that when a striver has no affinity to the perishable body and the world, he attains that state automatically. No ettort is required for such a state to be created as it always is there.

Link:–In the next two verses Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the steps to attain the blissful supreme state which is free from blemish.

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।
तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ।। ५२ ।।

yada te mohakalilaṁ buddhirvyatitariṣyati
tadā gantāsi nirvedaṁ śrotavyasya śrutasya ca

When your intellect crosses the mire of delusion you will then gain indifference to what has been heard and what is yet to be heard (about this world and the next). 52

Comment:

'Yadā te mohakalilaṁ buddhirvyatitariṣyati'—The opinion which favours egoism in this body and attachment for the body, family, kinsmen and objects, is called delusion. Actually there are no egoism and attachment for the body etc. They are merely assumed. Pleasure and displeasure in favourable and unfavourable circumstances and evils such as partiality, hatred, envy and jealousy etc., are called mire. When the intellect of a man gets entangled in this mire of delusion, he is perplexed and can't think properly.

He himself is sentient but by accepting his affinity for the insentient body and things etc., he identifies himself with them. Thus by closing his eyes to the real target, he gets engrossed in worldly pleasures and prosperity. This is called entanglement in the mire of delusion. But the intellect which takes the firm decision to be free from the worldly pleasures and prosperity and to attain salvation is called the 'Intellect' transcending the mire of delusion.

There are two means to crosses the mire of delusion—discrimination (2/11-30) and selfless service. Acute discrimination between the real and the unreal makes one indifferent to the unreal world; and a keen desire for selfless service for the welfare of others enables one to renounce the desire for one's own pleasures in the same way as when a disciple for his preceptor, a son for parents, a servant for his master develop tast for providing all sorts of comforts to them, then their own desires melt away.

The Discipline of Knowledge is somewhat difficult to practise because the desire for pleasure lingers on in it. When the striver comes across pleasures, he deviates from his spiritual path and inclines towards them. But the striver who has the feeling of service to others, utilizes the material for the service of others and thus his desire for pleasures perishes easily. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa has mentioned the Discipline of Disinterested Action superior to and easier than the Discipline of Knowledge (5/2), (5/3) and by it a striver quickly reaches Brahma–the Absolute (5/6).

'Tadā gantāsi nirvedaṁ śrotavyasya śrutasya ca'—The pleasure which men have enjoyed and heard* of and also the pleasures of heaven etc., which are yet to be heard of are transient. So how can they give peace and joy to a man (self) who is permanent ? Thus men become dispassionate. When intellect gets out of the mire of delusion then acute discrimination is developed that the world is ephemeral while he (the self) is eternal and therefore, how can the haleidoscopic world provide peace to him ? With this attitude of mind he automatically develops detachment from the whole world.

Lord Krsna has used the term 'Hear' instead of 'Enjoy' because there is attraction for pleasure after hearing about them. Thus 'Hearing' is an important factor for the

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* Here the term 'Hear' denotes the sense of sound, touch, colour taste and smell.

attraction of pleasures. Hearing as a means occupies an important place in the Disciplines of Knowledge and Devotion for spiritual progress also.

The terms 'Yadā' (when) and 'Tadā' (then) have been used to emphasize the fact that there is no condition that it will take so many years or months or days to develop this acute dispassion. As soon as your intellect crosses the mire of delusion, you will become dispassionate. It involves no time.

श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।
समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥ ५३ ॥

śrutivipratipannā te yadā sthāsyati niścalā
samādhāvacalā buddhistadā yogamavāpsyasi

When your intellect confused by hearing conflicting doctrines, has become immovable and firm (steady) in meditation (on God), you will then attain Self-Realization or union with God. 53

Comment:

[After crossing the mire of delusion also there may be confusion of mind by hearing conflicting spiritual doctrines. So Lord Kṛṣṇa inspires Arjuna to get rid of that confusion].

'Śrutivipratipannā te yadā sthāsyati niścalā samādhāvacalā buddhistadā yogamavāpsyasi'— Arjuna was in a fix whether he should perform his duty as a Kṣatriya or he should avoid the slaughter of his kith and kin. If he protected his family, he would shirk his duty. If he performed his duty of fighting, then the family would not be protected. So he was bewildered.* Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa inspires Arjuna to keep the intellect immovable in case of scriptural opinions and steady in case of God-Realization.

First of all the striver is unable to make up his mind whether to have honest and sincere dealings with the worldly people or to attain God. Then he decides that he has to render selfless service to the world. Having taken this decision he starts showing indifference and dispassion to the worldly pleasures. Then in the spiritual path he comes across different opinions of the scriptures. So it becomes difficult for him to decide which opinion he should follow. In that case by good company or faith etc., he is either able to take the decision or he surrenders himself to God. Then by God's grace his intellect becomes immovable. Secondly in all the scriptures and religions, God, soul and the world have been described in different forms and ways. But all of them agree, "I am soul, not body," "The world is to be left," "God is to be realized." By taking this decision the intellect of the striver becomes steady. Then the striver realizes God easily. So the only obstacle to God-Realization is lack of firmness of intellect.

The more deficiency in reaching at a decision regarding the contrary spiritual doctrines and in his own emancipation there is, the more delay there is. But in both as soon as the intellect becomes steady and determinate, eternal union with God is realized.

The intellect should be immovable in order to renounce affinity for the world which has been mentioned by the expression 'state of severance from union with pain' in the twenty-third verse of the sixth chapter; while it should be steady in order to have affinity for God which has been expressed by the expression 'evenness of mind is called Yoga' in the forty-eighth verse of the second chapter.

Here in 'Tadā yogamavāpsyasi' Yoga

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* A person may be in a dilemma in two ways—in worldly affairs and in scriptural ordinances or sects such as dualism and non dualism etc. It is more difficult to be free from the dilemma of the scriptural ordinances than from that of the worldly affairs. So Lord Kṛṣṇa explains that a striver should have a determinate intellect that he has to realize only God whatsoever may happen.

means to become established in union with God from whom there is no disunion. Only the striver has to abandon his affinity with the unreal. This union can be realized either by selfless service viz., Discipline of Disinterested Action, or discrimination viz., Discipline of Knowledge, or love for God viz., Discipline of Devotion, or meditation over annihilation of the world viz., Discipline of Annihilation (Layayoga) or by the process of restraining breath viz., Discipline of Austerity (Haṭhayoga) etc.

Link:–Arjuna puts the question about the illumined one whose intellect has crossed the mire of delusion and who has become steadfast and firm in meditation (on God).

अर्जुन उवाच

स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत व्रजेत किम् ॥ ५४ ॥

arjuna uvāca
sthitaprajñasya kā bhāṣā samādhisthasya keśava
sthitadhīḥ kiṁ prabhāṣeta kimāsīta vrajeta kim

Arjuna said:

O Keśava, what is the mark of the man of steadfast wisdom, established in God ? How does the man of firm wisdom, speak, how does he sit and how does he walk ? 54

Comment:

[Here Arjuna asks about the mark of the man of steadfast wisdom. Before this he put question about the nature of intellect and actions as he had some doubt about them (2/47-50). Lord Kṛṣṇa in fifty-second and fifty-third verses said, "After crossing the mire of delusion when your intellect has become steadfast and firm in mediation (on God), you will attain Self-Realization or union with God." Hearing this Arjuna wants to know his mark when he attains Self-Realization viz., he becomes a man of steadfast wisdom. He has another doubt about action and knowledge which he will ask (in 3/1-2)]. Had Arjuna put a question regarding his doubt about action and knowledge in the fifty-fourth verse here, then his question regarding the mark of the man of steadfast wisdom would have been much delayed].

'Samādhisthasya'*—Here this term has been used for the person who has attained God-Realization.

'Sthitaprajñasya'—This term has been used both for the enlightened (God-Realized) soul as well as the striver. The striver who is of a firm resolve and who never budges from his spiritual path is also called a man of steadfast wisdom. The realized soul whose intellect is already steadfast, is also a man of steadfast wisdom.

Now the question arises while Arjuna put the question about the enlightened soul only, why Lord Kṛṣṇa included the striver too. The answer is that in the Discipline of Knowledge aspirants generally develop disinclination for activities. The perfect soul gets total disinclination. An aspirant of the Discipline of Devotion has an inclination to the recitation of Divine Name, meditation, association with holy men and study of the scriptures etc. These activities are found in abundance in him. In the perfect state only activities pertaining to God are performed. Thus there is a vivid difference in the degree of activities of aspirants and realized souls in both the Disciplines of Knowledge and Devotion. But in the Discipline of Action the flow of activities goes on as usual without any

* Here the word 'Samādhi' has been used for God as it was also used in the forty-fourth verse of this chapter.

change in both the stages–as a striver and a perfected soul. So there is the description of strivers from the forty-first verse to the forty-fifth verse and also from the forty-seventh verse to the fifty-third verse. Thus in the context the means by which strivers can be perfect soul, have been enunciated and the marks of the perfect soul have also been described.

'Kā bhāṣā'—What is the description or mark of the enlightened soul? (Lord Kṛṣṇa will answer this question in the next verse).

'Sthitadhīḥ kiṁ prabhāṣeta'—How does the enlightened soul speak? (Lord Kṛṣṇa will answer this question in fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh verses).

'Kimāsīta'—How does he sit viz., how does he become dispassionate? (Lord Kṛṣṇa has answered it in verses from fifty-eighth to sixty-third).

'Vrajeta kim'—How does he walk viz., how does he behave? (Lord Kṛṣṇa has answered it in the verses sixty-fourth to seventy-first).

Link:–Now Lord Kṛṣṇa in the next verse answers Arjuna's first question.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान्।
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥ ५५ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

prajahāti yadā kāmānsarvānpārtha manogatān
ātmanyevātmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthitaprajñastadocyate

The Blessed Lord said:

O Pārtha (Arjuna), when a man abandons all the desires visiting the mind and is satisfied in the self by the self, he is said to be stable in wisdom. 55

Comment:

[According to the gospel of the Gītā a striver can attain perfection (God-Realization) by any discipline (that of Disinterested Action or Devotion etc.) which he follows according to his interest and taste and his perfection is described by that means only. Example—A striver following the Discipline of Devotion worships God constantly, meditating on Him with exclusive devotion (12/6). Therefore, in the enlightened state he becomes free from malice towards all beings (12/13). In the Discipline of Knowledge the striver perceives himself detached from these Guṇas (Attributes) (Modes) and is above them (14/19) and in the enlightened state he sits like a witness firmly established in God beyond all the Guṇas, having risen above them (14/22-25). Similarly, in Karmayoga it is the abandoning of all desires that is important. Hence the enlightened soul abandons all desires. In this verse Lord Kṛṣṇa dwells upon this point].

'Prajahāti yadā kāmānsarvān-pārtha manogatān'—It means that desire does not exist in the self because the self is ever lasting while desire is transient. Moreover it does not stay permanently in the mind but comes into it—'Manogatān'. But the man by identifying himself with body, senses, mind and intellect accepts the desire visiting the mind as resting in his own self.

'Jahāti'—Use of the prefix 'Pra' before the verb 'Jahāti' indicates that there is no trace of any desire left in him. A man can neither renounce his own self nor the things which are not his own, but he can renounce only the things which actually are not his own but he has mistaken them as his own. Similarly desires don't exist in one's own self, but one accepts them as existing in one's own self, so he has to cast them off.

The term 'Kāmān' (Desires) also includes the term 'Sarvān' (All), yet 'Sarvān' has been added to emphasize the fact that every fragment of all the desires should be cast off.

'Atmanyevātmanā tuṣṭaḥ'—After abandoning all the desires completely a man is satisfied in himself and with himself i.e., he is spontaneously contented in his own self.

Contentment is of two kinds—as a virtue and as the self. It is a virtue when the mind is free from all desires and it is the self when even a trace of discontentment is not there. The latter contentment is eternal. It knows no change. It is spontaneous. It is not the result of any practice or thought. The intellect of such a contented men always remains steadfast automatically.

'Sthitaprajñastadocyate'—Actually the man is always steady in wisdom but when he accepts his desires, because of unsteady mind he does not realize his stableness in wisdom. But when he abandons his desires viz., accepts the non-existence of desires, he realizes his stability in wisdom.

A striver has to make effort to concentrate his mind but by renouncing desires he does not have to do so, instead he attains this stage in a spontaneous manner.

In the discipline of action the striver is concerned with actions more than anything else. Action without motive is said to be the means for the sage to attain Yoga (Gītā 6/3). Therefore such a striver is concerned with actions in the stage when he is a striver as well as when he is an enlightened soul. Whatever standard an enlightened soul sets up, people in general follow the same (Gītā 3/21). The Lord has explained in the fourth chapter also that the striver following the Discipline of Disinterested Action while performing actions remains detached and while remaining detached performs actions (4/18).

In the fifty-third verse Lord Kṛṣṇa inspired Arjuna to keep his intellect immovable regarding scriptural doctrine and steady in case of God-Realization. So he has used the term 'Yadā' (when) and 'Tadā' (then) which explain that a striver is called stable in wisdom when he is completely free from desires and is satisfied in the self. It means that he is called a striver so long as he has even a fragment of desire, and an enlightened soul when desires are totally renounced. Therefore two important factors have been explained in the verse—to renounce the world and to get established in God.

The same two factors have been explained in verses fifty-six; fifty-seven; fifty-eight; fifty-nine; sixty and sixty-one; sixty-two to sixty-five; sixty-six to sixty-eight; sixty-nine; seventy and seventy-one and seventy-two.

Link:—The next two verses deal with the manner in which a realised soul speaks.

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥ ५६ ॥

duḥkheṣvanudvignamanāḥ sukheṣu vigataspṛhaḥ
vītarāgabhayakrodhaḥ sthitadhīrmunirucyate

He whose mind remains unperturbed in sorrows, who does not crave for pleasures, and who is free from passion, fear and anger is called the sage of stable wisdom. 56

Comment:

[Arjuna puts a question attaching importance to action while Lord Kṛṣṇa answers attaching importance to feelings because a change in feeling brings about a corresponding change in action*. The Lord is discussing here the feeling or the motive which changes the character of the action

* Whenever in the Gītā Arjuna puts a question attaching importance to action, Lord Kṛṣṇa answers it attaching importance to feelings and understanding because an action is performed according to the feelings and understanding. For example Arjuna in the fourteenth chapter asked, "What are the marks of him who has transcended the three modes ?" Lord Kṛṣṇa attaching importance to feelings replies, "He remains even-minded."

throughout. Worldly it may seem quite different].

'Duḥkheṣvanudvignamanāḥ—There is no end of sorrows, calumny, dishonour and unfavourable circumstances in this world. But the man of wisdom remains unperturbed because the aim of his life is to discharge his duty to the best of his ability and çapacity for the welfare of others without having any desire for its fruit. So he always remains happy and unperturbed even in the most unfavourable circumstances.

'Sukheṣu vigataspṛhaḥ'—He does not crave for any kind of pleasure such as praise, honour and favourable circumstances etc., nor does he have a desire to prolong such a state. He remains unruffled in the midst of favourable or hostile circumstances.

'Vītarāgabhayakrodhaḥ'—Our entanglement with worldly things is known as attachment (Rāga). If a stronger person tries to deprive us of worldly possessions, it arouses fear in us, whereas if a weaker person does so it arouses anger in us. But the person who is keen to do good to others automatically gets rid of attachments. This freedom from attachment leads him to fearlessness and calmness. Thus he becomes free from attachment, fear and anger.

So long as there are perturbations, cravings, attachment, fear and anger even in a small measure, a man is called a striver. But when he is totally free from them, he becomes an enlightened soul.

[Lust, desire, craving and greed etc., are the forms of attachment. In attachment there is an attraction for the perishable worldly objects].

'Sthitadhīrmunirucyate'—The mind of such a follower of the Discipline of Selfless Action becomes stable. Here the term 'Muni' has not been used for the person who keeps silent. The Lord has also not used the term 'Mauna' for penance of speech but He has used it for mental penance (Gītā 17/16). So here 'Muni' has been used for the contemplative person free from desire and attachment. He contemplates to remain unattached like an enlightened soul. Throughout his practice he has been very cautious to remain unattached. Such cautiousness automatically persists in the enlightened soul. That awareness leads him to attainment of beatitude (Gītā 3/19). It is because of this virtue of awareness that he has been described by the term 'Muni.'

यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम्।
नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ५७ ॥

yaḥ sarvatrānabhisnehastattatprāpya śubhāśubham
nābhinandati na dveṣṭi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā

He who is unattached everywhere, who is neither delighted at receiving good, nor dejected at receiving evil, is poised (stable) in wisdom. 57

Comment:

[In the previous verse Lord Krsna explained that the man of stable wisdom remains unperturbed while discharging his duty. In this verse he explains that such a man remains stable in favourable and unfavourable circumstances which he comes across as a result of the deeds he performs].

'Yaḥ sarvatrānabhisnehaḥ'— He remains unattached everywhere viz., he is not attached to his body, senses, mind, intellect, family and possessions. He never identifies himself with them, but always remains untainted by them. Despite his physical association with sense, objects, circumstances and individuals etc., he remains quite unattached with them, through the self.

'Tattatprāpya śubhāśubham nābhinandati na dveṣṭi—He remains

untainted and unaffected by good and bad, favourable and unfavourable circumstances. Meeting with good or pleasant he is not delighted. This delight means mental joy and expression of joy through words. Meeting with evil or unpleasant he is not dejected. This dejection means mental suffering and despair and the thought why and how this situation has occurred and how to get rid of this unpleasant situation. He remains untainted in favourable and unfavourable circumstances which we get as the result of destiny.

The expression 'Tat, Tat' signifies that meeting with all agreeable and disagreeable persons, incidents, objects and circumstances that can possibly cause mental perturbations; he neither rejoices in them nor hates them whenever, wherever and however he may meet with them.

'Tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā'—His determinate intellect now becomes stable in God. He understands that he is entirely unconcerned with the good and evil of the world because they always change while he always remains the same. There is no modification in the self while in the evolutes of Matter there is always modification. The man identifies himself with the body and regards the modification of the body as modification in his own self. But when he realizes the two as separate entities, his intellect becomes stable.

The second interpretation is that limitless and endless God can't be perceived by the intellect which is limited. So the intellect merges in God and then there remains nothing besides God. This is fixation of intellect in God or stability in wisdom.

A Karmayogī is ever active. Therefore the Lord in the fifty-sixth verse mentions that he neither craves for success (pleasure) nor is he perturbed in failure (sorrow) while in this verse He declares that he is neither delighted at receiving the agreeable nor dejected at receiving the disagreeable.

Link:–Now Lord Kṛṣṇa answers the third question, "How does an equanimous person sit ?"

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ५८ ॥

yadā saṁharate cāyaṁ kurmo'ṅgānīva sarvaśaḥ
indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyastasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā

When like a tortoise, which draws in its limbs from all directions, he withdraws his senses from sense-objects, his wisdom becomes stable. 58

Comment:

'Yadā saṁharate cāyaṁ kurmo'ṅgānīva sarvaśaḥ indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyastasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā'—Here the purpose of the illustration of the tortoise is that as a tortoise withdraws its six limbs—four legs, a tail and a forehand—into the shell to protect itself against possible dangers, so does an enlightened one also withdraw his five senses and one mind from sense objects. If he has the least affinity with senses, he can't be the man of stable wisdom.

Here the verb 'Saṁharate' has been given to emphasize the fact that he does not even think of the worldly pleasures.

In this verse the term 'Yadā' has been used but 'Tadā' has not been used. The reason is that when the senses are withdrawn from their sense-objects, the self substance which is axiomatic is realized because that is beyond the limit of time. So the word 'Tadā' which denotes time has not been given. Self-Realization or God-Realization is axiomatic and is beyond the reach of senses but we are veiled by the curtain pleasures and thus can't realize Him. Who still exists. But as soon as that veil is raised viz., we renounce our affinity to the worldly pleasures, He is revealed.

Link:–Lord Kṛṣṇa explains in the next verse that mere withdrawal of the senses from sense-objects is not the mark of the man of (steadfast wisdom).

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।
रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥ ५९ ॥

viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ
rasavarjaṁ raso'pyasya paraṁ dṛṣṭvā nivartate

Sense-objects cease for him who does not enjoy them with his senses, but the taste for them persists. This relish also disappears of the man of stable mind when he intuits the Supreme. 59

Comment:

'Viṣa yāvinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ rasavarjam'— A man becomes abstinent in two ways (i) To fast by one's own will or owing to sickness. (ii) To abstain from sense enjoyments. Here the term has been used to refer to a striver who withdraws his senses from sense-objects.

The senses of a sickman become unfit for indulgence but craving in them for sense enjoyment persists. They hope to enjoy them after recovery. Similarly sense-objects cease for the abstinent striver but his taste persists. It means that his body and senses become under restraint but his mind wanders.

The dispassionate strivers who have instinctively no attachment to pleasure become free from this taste. The striver who wants to follow the spiritual path but is not dispassionate, can restrain his body and senses by thinking of the adverse consequences of sense enjoyments though his taste persists.

'Raso'pyasya paraṁ dṛṣṭvā nivartate—The relish of the man of steadfast wisdom who intuits the Supreme disappears. It is a rule. But its contrary that with the disappearance (cessation) of relish, a striver attains steadfast wisdom is not true.

'Raso'pyasya'means that a striver has taste in his egoism viz., 'I ness'. This taste changes itself into attachment. Therefore a striver should have determination that he as a striver has no attachment, no desire. This sort of determination (aim) frees him from relish and after realizing God this relish disappears altogether.

Link:–What is the harm if this relish does not cease, is explained in the next verse.

यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥ ६० ॥

yatato hyapi kaunteya puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ
indriyāṇi pramāthīni haranti prasabhaṁ manaḥ

The turbulent senses, O son of Kuntī, forcibly carry away the mind of even a wiseman who is practising self-control. 60

Comment:

'Yatato hyapi kaunteya puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ indriyāṇi pramāthīni haranti prasabhaṁ manaḥ' *—The

* Here Lord Kṛṣṇa has called the senses turbulent and in the thirty-fourth verse of the sixth chapter Arjuna has called the mind turbulent. It means that both the senses and the mind are turbulent. Similarly here it is explained that senses carry away the mind, while in the sixty-seventh verse of this chapter it is explained that the mind carries away discrimination. It means that both senses and mind are impetuous. So a striver should control both of them.

term wise man has been used for the man who practises self-control, who performs his duty without attachment and desire for its fruit, who discriminates between the real and the unreal and who thinks for the welfare of all creatures. The turbulent senses of even such a wise man carry away his mind towards pleasures. The reason is that so long as mind is not permanently established in God, the past influences of the enjoyment of pleasures attract senses and mind towards pleasures, forcibly. Even some sages could not control this temptation. Therefore a striver should never believe his senses and should be always on his guard.* Moreover he should never feel proud of sense-control.

Link:—In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains how to control the turbulent senses which forcibly carry away the mind of even a wise man in whom the taste for sense-objects still persists.

तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।
वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ६१ ॥

tāni sarvāṇi saṁyamya yukta āsīta matparaḥ
vaśe hi yasyendriyāṇi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā

Having controlled all the senses a striver should sit for meditation, devoting himself heart and soul to Me. For his wisdom (mind) is stable (constant) whose senses are under control. 61

Comment:

'Tāni sarvāṇi saṁyamya yukta āsīta matparaḥ'—By controlling the senses the striver should devote himself heart and soul to Me. Moreover he should not feel proud of his sense-control because pride goes before a fall. He should rather feel that it was only God's grace which enabled him to control his senses. Generally in a striver following the Discipline of Action there is predominance of action. Therefore he develops egoism. Due to this egoistic feeling he pays little attention to the divine grace, though the endowment of human body, inclination, practice and success of this discipline are all the result of the divine grace. By His special divine grace the Lord is exhorting the striver to be devoted to Him. Thus he should devote himself heart and soul to Him thinking that he is God's and God is his, while he is neither of the world nor the world is his. He should infuse the sense of 'I' in only God, not in the world at all.

This section deals with the Discipline of Disinterested Action. So Lord Kṛṣṇa should have told Arjuna some method of that discipline. But Lord Kṛṣṇa time and again has laid great emphasis on devotion to Him and has glorified it very much. So He declares—"Among all Yogīs, he who worships Me with faith, his inmost self merged in Me, is considered by Me to be the best Yogī–most devout (Gītā 6/47)."

'Vaśe hi yasyendriyāṇi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā'—In the fifty-ninth verse Lord Kṛṣṇa said that even at the cessation of sense-objects a striver does not become a man of steadfast wisdom. But here he says that the wisdom of the striver who has controlled his senses is stable. Why? The clarification is that in 2/59 even at the cessation of the sense-objects the taste (relish) for sense enjoyments persists. But here in this verse the senses of the striver are controlled and his taste has also disappeared. Thus the striver becomes stable in wisdom (mind) at the cessation of the taste.

* A man should not live in loneliness with a woman even though she is his mother, sister or daughter because the impetuous senses enslave even a wise man (Manu. 2/215).

Link:–When a striver devotes himself heart and soul to God, his senses are controlled and his relish (taste) for sense enjoyments disappears. But what about those who don't devote themselves to God? The answer is provided in the next two verses.

ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।
सङ्गात्संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ ६२ ॥
क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥ ६३ ॥

dhyāyato viṣayānpuṁsaḥ saṅgasteṣūpajāyate
saṅgātsaṁjāyate kāmaḥ kāmātkrodho'bhijāyate
krodhādbhavati sammohaḥ sammohātsmṛtivibhramaḥ
smṛtibhraṁśād buddhināśo buddhināśātpraṇaśyati

Brooding on the objects of senses, a man develops attachment for them; from attachment springs up desire; from desire (unfulfilled) ensues anger. From anger arises delusion, from delusion; confusion of memory; from confusion of memory, loss of reason; and from loss of reason (discrimination), he goes to complete ruin. 62-63

Comment:

'Dhyāyato viṣayānpuṁsaḥ saṅgasteṣūpajāyate'—When a man does not devote himself to God viz., he does not meditate on God, he broods on objects of senses because in that case there is nothing else to brood on except the world. Thus by brooding over them he develops attachment for them. Due to this attachment he enjoys sense-objects. This enjoyment may be mental or physical. The pleasure resulting from enjoyment enhances attachment. Due to this enhanced attachment he repeatedly dwells on sense-objects. It is a rule that the enhanced attachment persists whether he enjoys the sense-objects or not.

'Saṅgātsaṁjāyate kāmaḥ'—By developing attachment for sense enjoyments one has a desire to acquire and enjoy those sense-objects.

'Kāmātkrodho'bhijāyate'—Gratification of desire misleads to greed and one who creates an obstacle in the possibility of its gratification becomes a victim of anger. The desire for respect and honour on the ground of caste, stage of life and virtues etc., also causes anger if some obstacles are put in its gratification.

Desire is a Rājasika trait; delusion a Tāmasika one and anger lies between the two. If you are angry with any one, it means that you have attachment for something or the other. If you are angry with the man who defames you, it means that you are attached to fame. If you are enranged with a person who censures you, it proves your pride of your flawlessness and so on.

'Krodhādbhavati sammohaḥ'—From anger ensues delusion. In fact delusion ensues not only from anger but also from desire, greed and attachment.

(i) Delusion born of desire veils discrimination and so a man goaded by desire performs undesirable actions.

(ii) Out of anger a deluded man utters harsh and pinching words to even friends and adorable ones and performs wrong and cruel deeds.

(iii) Delusion born of greed makes a man blind and he can't distinguish between the real and the unreal, the right and the wrong and he cheats others by using fraudulent methods.

(iv) Delusion born of attachment creates partiality.

Now the question arises why Lord Kṛṣṇa

has said that delusion ensues from anger while it ensues from desire, greed and attachment as well. If we give a serious thought, we come to know that goaded by desire, greed and attachment a man thinks of his own selfish motive and pleasures, while in anger he thinks of doing evil to others. Thus delusion born of anger is more disastrous than that born of the other three. There-fore Lord Kṛṣṇa has said that delusion ensues from anger.

'Sammohātsmṛtivibhramaḥ'—From delusion arises confusion of memory. It means that a man forgets the decision which he took to attain salvation or to follow the spiritual path in accordance with the ordinance of the scriptures etc.

'Smṛtibhraṁśād buddhināśaḥ'—From confusion of memory ensues loss of reason viz., a man cannot discriminate between right and wrong.

'Buddhināśātpraṇaśyati'—Loss of discrimination paves the way to self-destruction.

Therefore it is obligatory for all the strivers to devote themselves heart and soul to God in order to escape this self-destruction.

Brooding on the objects of senses leads to attachment. Attachment leads to desire; desire to anger; anger to delusion; delusion to loss of memory; loss of memory to loss of reason and finally loss of reason leads to utter ruin. Though it takes time to describe this order yet the rise of these propensities leading to the destruction of man is as fast as death caused by an electric shock.

Link:–Now Lord Kṛṣṇa in the next verse answers the fourth question– How does a man of steadfast wisdom walk?

रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥ ६४ ॥
प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।
प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥ ६५ ॥

rāgadveṣaviyuktaistu viṣayānindriyaiścaran
ātmavaśyairvidheyātmā prasādamadhigacchati
prasāde sarvaduḥkhānām hānirasyopajāyate
prasannacetaso hyāśu buddhiḥ paryavatiṣṭhate

But the self-controlled Yogī (practicant or striver), while enjoying the sense-objects with the senses, which are controlled and free from attraction and aversion, attains placidity of mind. With the attainment of such placidity of mind, all his sorrows come to an end; and the intellect of such a person of tranquil mind soon becomes firmly established in God. 64-65

Comment:

'Tu'–In the previous verse Lord Kṛṣṇa said that by brooding on the objects of senses a man goes to complete ruin while here he says that the striver free from attachment while enjoying the sense-objects with the senses becomes firmely established in God. So the Lord has used the term 'Tu' (but) to differentiate between the two.

'Vidheyātmā'—To achieve his aim it is very necessary for a striver specially for a Karmayogī to control his mind otherwise he may have attachment for pleasure and thus may go to ruin.

'Ātmavaśyaiḥ rāgadveṣaviyuktaiḥ indriyaiḥ'—As the term 'Vidheyātmā' has been used for controlling the mind, so the word 'Ātmavaśyaiḥ' has been used for sense-

control. In worldly dealings senses should be kept under control and for sense-control they should be free from attachment and aversion. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa in the thirty-fourth verse of the third chapter, has warned strivers and said, "Attachment and aversion are rooted in all sense-objects. A striver should not come under their sway because they are verily his enemies." Similarly He has said in the third verse of the fifth chapter, "The striver who is free from the pairs of opposites such as attachment and aversion etc., is easily set free from bondage."

'Viṣayān caran'—The striver who has controlled his mind and whose senses are controlled and free from attachment and aversion, uses the sense-objects but does not enjoy them viz., he does not derive pleasure from them. And it is enjoyment rather than use which misleads him to ruin.

'Prasādamadhigacchati'—The striver who enjoys the sense-objects being free from attachment and aversion attains placidity (purity) of mind. This placidity (serenity) of mind is called mental austerity (Gītā 17/16) which is superior to the austerity of body and austerity of speech. So a striver should neither enjoy the sense-objects with attachment nor should renounce them with aversion because both attachment and aversion lead him to the affinity for the world. Such a striver attains placidity of mind and if that placidity of mind is not enjoyed, that leads to God-Realization.

'Prasāde sarvaduḥkhānāṁ hānirasyopajāyate'—With the attainment of such placidity of mind, all his sorrows come to an end, because it is attachment only which causes sorrows. These sorrows give birth to desire which again causes sorrows. When attachment goes away, the mind becomes serene and that serenity destroys all sorrows. Actually all the sorrows are born because of affinity for matter and its evolutes—the world and the body. A striver has affinity to the world with the desire to enjoy pleasures. This desire is born of despair or the feeling of something lacking in himself. When there is placidity of mind, despair disappears. When despair disappears, there is no desire for pleasures and when there is no desire for pleasures, affinity for the world automatically breaks off and then sorrows disappear. It means that placidity of the mind results in breaking off affinity for the world and establishment of the self in God.

Here 'Sarvaduḥkhānāṁ hāniḥ' does not mean that a striver will not come across unfavourable and sorrowful circumstances; but it means that those circumstances can't create commotion and agitation in his mind.

'Prasannacetaso hyāśu buddhiḥ paryavatiṣṭhate'—The intellect of such a person of tranquil mind soon becomes firmly established in God viz., the striver himself becomes established in God and his intellect has no doubts in the least.

Something Remarkable

Enhancement of either placidity or uneasiness for God enables a striver to realize God. The Gopīs were locked up by their husbands, brothers and parents and prevented from going to meet Lord Kṛṣṇa. The uneasiness to meet the Lord destroyed their sins and the placidity of the mind by the meditation on God destroyed their virtues. Thus being free from sins and virtues and leaving their bodies, they were the first to meet God. But in the worldly affairs placidity and uneasiness of mind mislead a man to bondage and strengthen the bondage because his aim is to enjoy the worldly pleasures. The living examples are the common worldly people who are entangled in the worldly snare because of placity and uneasiness in mundane affairs.

The inner self is overwhelmed in placidity and uneasiness. Just as the colour which is added to liquid wax becomes a permanent part of it, in the same way whatever thoughts are put into the overwhelmed inner self they become a permanent part of it and lead the striver to salvation or mislead him to damnation. Therefore a striver should neither be pleased nor displeased while gaining or losing the most charming objects of the world.

Link:–Lord Kṛṣṇa clarifies the point of view expressed in the pervious two verses by negative inference.

नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।
न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥ ६६ ॥

nāsti buddhirayuktasya na cāyuktasya bhāvanā
na cābhāvayataḥ śāntiraśāntasya kutaḥ sukham

He who has not controlled his mind and senses can have no determinate intellect; nor can such an undisciplined man have the sense of duty. The man without having the sense of duty can have no peace; and how can there be happiness for one lacking peace ? 66

Comment:

[In the Discipline of Disinterested Action, control over the mind and senses is important because without control, desire persists and with the persistence of desire, the mind does not get fixed. Therefore it is obligatory for a striver following the Discipline of Action to control his mind and senses. But what happens to the man who has not controlled his mind and senses, is explained in this verse].

'Nāsti budhirayuktasya'—He who has not controlled his mind and senses cannot have the determinate intellect* that he has only to realize God because he indulges in worldly pleasures and prosperity. He develops desire for riches, honour and bodily comforts etc. These numerous desires keep his intellect absessed and don't allow him to have his intellect stable.

'Na cāyuktasya bhāvanā'—He whose intellect is not determinate can't have the feeling that he has to discharge his duty by renouncing attachment and desire etc., because he has not fixed the aim of his life.

'Na cābhāvayataḥ śāntiḥ'—The man who does not discharge his duty efficiently and sincerely can have no peace, whosoever he may be.

'Aśāntasya kutaḥ sukham'—How can he who lacks peace be happy? He can't be happy because his heart is filled with agitation and commotion. Despite acquiring all agreeable sense-objects, his mental perturbation can't be wiped out. In other words he can't be happy.

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains why intellect of the person who had not controlled his mind and senses cannot be determinate.

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनु विधीयते ।
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवाम्भसि ॥ ६७ ॥

indriyāṇāṁ hi caratāṁ yanmano'nu vidhīyate
tadasya harati prajñāṁ vāyurnāvamivāmbhasi

Just as the wind carries away a ship on the water, the mind that yields to anyone of the wandering senses takes away the discrimination of man. 67

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* Without change of the sense of I (egotism), senses are not controlled and without sense-control there can't be determinate intellect. But if a striver changes his egotism and accepts that he is a striver whose aim is nothing but God-Realization, his mind and senses are instinctively controlled.

Comment:

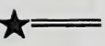
[God has bestowed upon man this human body to attain Him. So a man should firmly resolve to attain God-Realization. This resolve removes his attachment for pleasures and makes his intellect determinate. But what happens if the intellect does not become determinate, has been described here].

'Indriyāṇām hi caratām yanmano'nu vidhīyate'—Senses are involuntarily drawn to the sense-objects. The mind that follows anyone of the senses is naturally led astray by it. For example while relishing a tasteful dish the sense of taste gets attached to it and then it attracts the mind and thus the misdirected mind gets entangled in this taste.

'Tadasya harati prajñām'—When the mind gets entangled in pleasures, the man immediately loses his determinate intellect that he has to realize God only.

'Vāyurnāvamivāmbhasi'—A ship without a rudder is at the mercy of a strong wind. As a rudderless ship does not reach its destination, the misdirected mind carries away man's discrimination.

The strong wind either pushes away the ship in the wrong direction or sinks it. But a skilful sailor manages the ship in such a way that the wind instead of pushing it away from its course helps it in sailing and reaching its destination. Similarly the misdirected mind misguides the discrimination in two ways—It leads it astray from the path of God-Realization and engages him in sense pleasures or it ruins it by entangling it in prohibited pleasures. But the controlled mind and senses don't take the intellect way ward, they rather help him in realizing God (2/64-65).



Link:–Now in the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa describes the condition of the striver who has controlled his senses.

तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ६८ ॥

tasmādyasya mahābāho nigṛhītāni sarvaśaḥ
indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyastasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā

Therefore, O mighty-armed, his intellect is stable, whose senses are completely restrained from their objects. 68

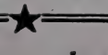
Comment:

'Tasmādyasya mahābāho nigṛhītāni sarvaśaḥ indriyāṇindriyārthebhyastasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā'—Lord Kṛṣṇa concludes the topic of the mind and the senses by using the word 'Tasmād' (therefore) and says that the intellect of the person whose mind and senses are completely free from the worldly attractions, is stable.

By giving the term 'Sarvaśaḥ' (completely) He means to explain that his senses are not inclined towards pleasures whether he lives in the world or in seclusion and even if his mind and senses are directed to the sense-objects, they don't lead his intellect astray.

'Nigṛhītāni' (Restrained) means that the senses have no attachment to the sense-objects. As a snake without teeth has no poison, the senses without attachment and aversion have no poison to degrade a man from spiritual path; they become sublimated and lead a striver to divinity.

This verse means that if a striver has determination that his aim is to realize God rather than to enjoy worldly pleasures and prosperity, his intellect will become stable.



Link:–What is the difference between a striver whose senses are completely restrained from their objects, and an ordinary man ? Here is the answer.

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।
यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥ ६९ ॥

yā niśā sarvabhūtānāṁ tasyāṁ jāgarti saṁyamī
yasyāṁ jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneḥ

That which is night to all beings, in that state (of Divine Knowledge and Supreme Bliss) the self-controlled person keeps awake. And that (the ever changing worldly happiness) in which all beings keep awake is night to the enlightened seer. 69

Comment:

'Yā niśā sarvabhūtānām'—Those worldly people whose senses and mind are uncontrolled and who are immersed in pleasures are asleep in the dark because they never think that the aim of human life is emancipation or salvation. Further they never think 'What is God ?' 'What is Self-Realization ?' 'Why are we suffering ?' 'Why are there all these burning sensations ?'. Where will our misdeeds take us ?' Turning face from these thoughts is complete darkness for the worldly people.

Here the term 'Bhūtānām' has been used to explain the fact that the human beings who hanker after pleasures and prosperity and are immersed in them are like other beings such as birds and beasts etc., because both have no inclination for God-Realization. If there is any difference between the two, that is that human beings' discrimination is much more developed than beasts' and birds' and therefore, by using this discrimination they can serve others and attain salvation or God-Realization, while birds and beasts can't. On the other hand if they misuse this discrimination in hankering after pleasures and prosperity, they can be more harmful to the society than even the wild beasts. Animals and birds eat food only to sustain their life, they never hoard. But human beings are given to hoarding whatever they get. Therefore they create obstacles to the utilization of those things by others.

'Tasyām jāgrati saṁyamī'—When the worldly people remain asleep in the dark having no inclination for God-Realization, the seer who has controlled his senses and mind and who has no attachment for pleasures and prosperity and whose aim of life is only God-Realization, remains wakeful because his intuition, his concepts and precepts are all filled with Divinity.

'Yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni'—The worldly people who want to accumulate wealth by means fair or foul and who hanker after transient sensual pleasures, honour and praise etc., are wakeful to the mundane affairs.

'Sā niśā paśyato muneḥ'—The worldly people feel very happy and deem themselves very wise in enjoying and hoarding worldly pleasures. To those the seer in the state of Divine Knowledge and Supreme Bliss perceives as dark.

As children while playing marbles attach great importance to small balls of marble, glass or clay, the people attach importance to the worldly prosperity and pleasures and for gaining them they employ all sorts of means fair or foul. But the self controlled seer knows that all the mundane pleasures, prosperity and praise etc., are transient, illusory and kaleidoscopic while God and his own self are eternal real and permanent. He also knows how the best use of mundane objects can be made and how far they can be utilized for the welfare of others. He uses them in the service of others.

In spite of the manifest appearance of the

world to the mind and senses, he has a firm conviction that the world is a mere illusion, it of has no eal existence at all. So wakefulness of the worldly people is just like a dark night for him.

Link:–The world is just like a dark night to the seer. Then how does he live in the world ? The answer to these queries is provided in the verse that follows.

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं
समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।
तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे
स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥ ७० ॥

āpūryamāṇamacalapratiṣṭhaṁ
samudramāpaḥ praviśanti yadvat
tadvatkāmā yaṁ praviśanti sarve
sa śāntimāpnoti na kāmakāmī

As waters of different rivers enter the ocean which though full, remains undisturbed, likewise the man in whom all enjoyments merge themselves, attains peace, not he who hankers after such enjoyments. 70

Comment:

'Āpūryamāṇamacalapratiṣṭhaṁ samudramāpaḥ praviśanti yadvat'— In rainy season the rivers expand and are flooded by heavy rain storms. All those rivers continue to pour themselves into the ocean but its magnitude ever remains the same. In summer when heat evaporates the water of rivers and the rivers become narrow having shallow water, even then the expanse of the ocean remains the same. It is ever full and never desires water from streams and rivers. It means that it ever remains satiated. It always remains within limits.

'Tadvatkāmā* yaṁ praviśanti sarve sa śāntimāpnoti'—The self-controlled seer is like the ocean. He also comes across the worldly enjoyments. But they all merge in him without causing any perturbation or agitation in his body and mind. Thus he attains supreme-peace. This peace is not due to mundane objects but it has emanated from God-Realization (Gītā 2/46).

In this illustration the realized soul is compared to the ocean and the water of the river is compared to the mundane objects. Water of the ocean and that of the river are of the some category. But the realized soul is quite different in nature. There is a world of difference between the two. The perfect soul is sentient, eternal, real, limitless and endless while the enjoyments are insentient, perishable, unreal, limited and have an end. Secondly the waters of rivers enter the ocean and merge in it, but the mundane objects flowing towards the enlightened soul don't reach the self they merely reach his body and inner sense. Thus this illustration of the river and the ocean. Thus the illustration of the river and the ocean is not fully applicable here. It only describes the state of his body and the inner sense. This does not explain the state of his real self.

'Na kāmakāmī'—The worldly enjoyments and pleasures can't satisfy a man who hankers after them. He can never be satisfied. He can never be free from desires, anxieties and burning sensation. So how can he attain peace ? The reason is that the insentient can't satisfy the sentient; the sentient can be satisfied only by the sentient.

* Here the term 'Kāma' has not been used for desires but for the objects of pleasures which are desired.

Link:–Now Lord Kṛṣṇa concludes the answer to the last question, "How does the man of steadfast wisdom walk viz., what is his mode of conduct?"

विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥ ७१ ॥

vihāya kāmānyaḥ sarvānpumāṁścarati niḥspṛhaḥ
nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ sa śāntimadhigacchati

He, who gives up all desires, and moves free from the sense of mine egoism and thirst for necessities of life, attains peace. 71

Comment:

'Vihāya kāmānyaḥ sarvān-pumaṁścarati niḥspṛhaḥ'—An earnest wish for something is 'Kāmanā' (Desire) while an earnest wish for acquiring or preserving necessities of life is 'Spṛhā' (Thirst). The man of steadfast wisdom lives devoid of longings and desires and has no thirst for acquiring or preserving even the necessities of life because he has attained the supreme bliss for which the human body was bestowed upon him. So he becomes free from all cares and does not care even for his body whether it lives or dies.

In this verse as well as in the fifty-fifth verse of this chapter emphasis has been laid on renunciation of desires because in the Discipline of Disinterested Action without abandoning them no striver can possess steadfast wisdom. A striver has affinity for the world only because of desires. If desire are given up, there can't remain any affinity for the world.

'Nirmamaḥ'—The man of stable wisdom has not the least-sense of mine with men, things and even his body and senses because he has received them from the world and therefore they belong to tne world, not to him. It is a blunder to have the sense of possession over the things acquired. On rectifications of this blunder the sense of possession over persons, objects, body and sense-organs in totally wiped out.

'Nirahaṅkāraḥ'—'I am this body'—to have this notion is egoism. The realized soul is free from the egoism. The body, sense-organs, mind and intellect are visible in some light. This ego is also perceived in this light. From the view-point of this light all these are objects of perception. The onlooker (seer) is quite different from the seen—this is the rule. With this realization the man of steady wisdom becomes quite free from egoism.

'Sa śāntimadhigacchati'—The man of steadfast wisdom attains peace. It does not mean that he attains peace after being free from desire, thirst for enjoyment, attachment and egoism. The fact is that peace is spontaneous. But a man by having desires to enjoy worldly pleasures can't realize that peace. But as soon as he becomes free from desire, thirst for necessities, the sense of mine and egoism, he can realize that peace.

In the verse out of the four—(desires, thirst for necessities, the sense of mine and egoism), egoism is more important than the other three because a striver after becoming free from egoism, becomes free from the other three also. If there is no egoism, how will the sense of mine persist, who will desire and for whom will he desire?

Now the question arises when the renunciation of desire etc., is also included in the renunciation of egoism, why has Lord Kṛṣṇa described renunciation of desire? The answer is that out of these four desire is dull while thirst for necessities is subtle; the sense of mine subtler; and egoism the subtlest. So by abandoning desire it becomes easy to abandon the other three.

Any thing can't be gained merely by desire, what is destined, we'll get. Having

such faith we should discard desires. 'Spṛhā' is a subtle form of desire. In absence of desire it persists. It (Spṛhā) is the desire to have bare necessities of life. In its fulfilment also we are not free. Whatever is to happen, will happen. Then why should we have 'Spṛhā' ? When we cease dependence on food, water and clothings, 'Spṛhā' is destroyed. After renouncing desires and 'Spṛhā' the sense of mine in the body remains. This is not a rule that this possessive spirit preserves articles and they are ruined without this spirit. Therefore the possessive spirit serves no purpose. With renunciation of all the three—desire, 'Spṛhā' (subtle desire) and possessive spirit, the renunciation of ego becomes very easy, otherwise it is very difficult.

How to get rid of Egoism & the Sense of Mine

From the stand point of the Discipline of Disinterested Action:—'Nothing is mine; because I have no independent claim on things, persons, circumstances, incidents and situations etc. When nothing is mine, it means that I need nothing because I need food, water and clothes for the body, only if it is mine; but if it is not mine, I need nothing for it. When there is a clear understanding that nothing is mine and I need nothing, there is no question of egoism (feeling of 'I') because egoism persists by accepting affinity for the body, things and circumstances etc. The fact is that the so-called my body has its affinity for the world, so it should be used to render service to the world, because I need nothing. By having this sort of feeling, egoism perishes and a striver becomes free from egoism and the sense of mine.

From the stand point of Discipline of Knowledge:—every man has the knowledge 'I am'. In 'I am', I is a fragment of Nature and 'am' denotes 'Reality' (Eternal Existence). This 'am' is used with 'I'—In absence of 'I', 'am' will not stand, only 'Is' will remain.

'I am', 'you are', 'this is' and 'that is'—all these four are in respect of individuals, space and time. This is limited conception. If the limited conception is not maintained, then universal 'Is' remains. When a striver is established in this universal 'Is' he becomes comletely free from the sense of 'I' and 'mine.'

From the stand point of Discipline of Devotion:—What is called 'I' or 'Mine' actually belongs to God, because had the persons, things, body been mine, I might have protected them from decay and possessed them for ever. But it is not so. It means that the so-called my body, senses, mind, intellect etc., are His and I am also His. By having this sort of feeling a striver becomes free from the sense of mine and egoism.

Link:–In the next verse there is the description of the man having spiritual illuminations as a result of being free from desire, thirst for necessities of life, the sense of mine and egoism.

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।
स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥ ७२ ॥

eṣā brāhmī sthitiḥ pārtha naināṁ prāpya vimuhyati
sthitvāsyāmantakāle'pi brahmanirvāṇamṛcchati .

O Pārtha, such is the state of the God-Realized soul. Having attained this state, he overcomes delusion. Being established in this state even at the death hour, he attains Brahmic Bliss (Identification with the Absolute State). 72

Comment:

'Eṣā brāhmī sthitiḥ pārtha'—This is the Brāhmī state viz., the state of the God-Realized soul. On being free from egoism, individuality is completely wiped out and then a striver is automatically established in God. Individuality persisted only due to affinity with the world. With renunciation of affinity individuality is completely gone. The term 'Eṣā' refers to 'very near'. It denotes the expressions 'Vihāya kāmān' (giving up desires), 'Niḥspṛhaḥ' (free from thirst for necessities), 'Nirmamaḥ' (free from the sense of mine) and 'Nirhaṅkāraḥ' (free from egoism) used in the preceding verse.

Having heard the Lord's declaration—"When your intellect transcends the mine of delusion and the confusion by hearing conflicting doctrines, you will realize union with God", Arjuna was inquisitive to know that state of union with God. So Arjuna raised four questions in order to know the marks of the man of steadfast wisdom. Having answered those four questions the Lord here declares that this is the state of Godhood (union with God). In this state of eternal union with God, no individuality remains, only the Divinity remains. In order to point out this fact the Lord addresses Arjuna as 'Pārtha' here.

'Nainām prāpya vimuhyti'—So long as a man has egoism (the feeling of 'I') in the body, he is deluded. Lack of discrimination between the real and the unreal is delusion. The man himself being real, identifies himself with the unreal; this identification is delusion. When a striver knows the unreal as unreal, his affinity to it ceases* and he realizes that he is already established in the real. With this realization he is never deluded (Gītā 4/35).

'Sthitvāsyāmantakāle'pi brahma-nirvāṇamṛcchati'—This human body has been bestowed upon man only for God-Realization. So the Lord gives an opportunity even to the vilest sinner to attain Him by establishing himself in Him even at the time of death viz., by breaking off his affinity with Matter. Lord Kṛṣṇa has also announced it in the thirtieth verse of the seventh chapter, "One who knows My integral being, comprising Adhibhūta (the field of Matter), Adhidaiva (Brahma) and Adhiyajña (the unmanifest Divinity) even at the time of death, attains Me." Similarly He has also announced in the fifth verse of the eighth chapter, "He who departs from this body, thinking of Me alone, even at the time of death, attains Me; there is no doubt about it."

By the above expression the Lord declares the glory of this Brāhmī state (Godhood). By being established in this state even at the time of death one attains Brahma. As the Lord declared about equanimity that even a little practice of it protects one from great fear (of birth and death) (2/40), so does He here declare that if one gets established in this Brāhmī state even at the time of death by breaking of his affinity with Matter, he attains Brahma. Attachment to Matter (non-self) is the only obstacle to the attainment of this state. If a person renounces the attachment even at the time of death, he realizes his real axiomatic state of Godhood.

Now a question arises how a man who could not attain God through out his life can attain Him at the time of death when his body and intellect both grow weak. The answer is that man's union with Him is spontaneous, only he has to realize this fact† and this fact can be realized either by God's or saints' grace or by good influences of the past actions.

The word 'Api' (Even) means that during life if he attains the state of Godhood (Brāhmī state) he becomes a liberated soul. But even at time of death if he becomes free from the sense of mine and egoism, he attains Him immediately without any sort of practice, meditation and trance etc.

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* By knowing the unreal as unreal, a man becomes free from it, because in fact the unreal has no existence. The unreal seems to exist in the light of the real. If a person does not become free from the unreal even after knowing it as unreal, it proves that he has not actually known it.

† Practice, thought and repeated remembrance are helpful in attaining the 'Nirvikalpa' (fixed) state. But as far as attainment of the state of Brahmic Bliss concerned, that is beyond the access of intellect.

By using the terms 'Brahmanirvāṇam' (Oneness with Brahma) Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that the striver of the Discipline of Disinterested Action attains the same Brahma as the striver of the Discipline of Knowledge (Gītā 5/24-26). The same fact has been pointed out in the fifth verse of the fifth chapter when he declares, "The supreme state which is attained by the Sāṅkhyayogī (the follower of the Discipline of Knowledge), is attained also by the Karmayogī (the follower of the Discipline of Disinterested Action).

Something Note-Worthy

Man himself is sentient but he has accepted his affinity for the insentient. Therefore instead of attaining salvation or God-Realization he goes to ruin. By using his discrimination he thinks to attain God while out of delusion he wants to have affinity to the Matter.

Delusion is born of egoism, the sense of mine or desire. To accept the body as 'I' or 'Mine' is delusion born of egoism the sense of mine while the wish to acquire or preserve something is the delusion born of desire. Arjuna like other worldly people had delusion born of egoism and the sense of mine as well as desire. In the sentence used in the first chapter—'We who are righteous persons clearly see the sin,' is an example of delusion born of egoism; 'These kinsmen will be destroyed' is that of delusion born of the sense of mine and 'We should not fight otherwise we shall incur sin and go to hell' is that born of desire.

To remove this delusion Lord Kṛṣṇa has talked about two kinds of discrimination– discrimination between the real and the unreal (2/11-30) and discrimination between discharging one's duty and abandoning it (2/31-53).

While discriminating between the body and the soul, Lord Kṛṣṇa explained that there was never a time when he or those kings were non-existent nor they would cease to exist in future. It is a fact that these bodies didn't exist before, nor will they exist in future and in the interim also they are changing every moment as every born one passes through babyhood, youth and old age. He also explained that as a man discarding worn-out clothes, takes new ones, likewise the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies, enters into others which are new. So he should not grieve.

While explaining the discrimination between discharging one's duty and abandoning it, He said, "There is nothing more welcome for a man of the warrior class than a righteous war, which is an open gateway to heaven; if you don't wage it, you will incur sin. But if you fight treating pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, alike you will not incur sin. Your right is to perform your duty, but never to its fruit. Let not the fruit of action be your object, nor let your attachment be to inaction. Therefore perform your duty being fixed in Yoga, because equanimity consists in remaining even-minded in success and failure. The man who, endowed with equanimity performs his duty becomes free from virtues and vices in his life time. When your intellect transcends the mire of delusion and when it, confused by having conflicting statements, becomes poised and firmly fixed in meditation (on God), you will attain union with God."

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ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे सांख्ययोगो नाम द्वितीयोऽध्यायः ॥२॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde sāṅkhyayogo nāma dvitīyo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ, Tat, Sat, the names of the Lord, in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavadgītā, the knowledge of Brahma, the Supreme, the Science of Sāṅkhyayoga and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Arjuna the second chapter entitled 'Sāṅkhyayoga' ends.

In the Discipline of Knowledge discrimination occupies an important place and Lord Kṛṣṇa started His gospel with this discipline. So this chapter is designated: 'Sāṅkhyayoga.'

Words, letters and Uvāca (said) in the Second Chapter

(1) In this chapter in **'Atha dvitīyo'–dhyāyaḥ'** there are three words, in **'Sañjaya Uvāca' 'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** etc., there are fourteen words, in verses there are nine hundred and fifty-seven words and there are thirteen concluding words. Thus the total number of the words is nine hundred and eighty-seven.

(2) In this chapter in **'Atha dvitīyo'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are seven letters, in **'Sañjaya Uvāca', 'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** etc., there are forty-five letters, in verses there are two thousand, four hundred and three letters and there are forty-five concluding letters. Thus the total number of the letters is two thousand and five hundred. In this chapter out of the seventy-two verses the fifth, seventh, eighth, twentieth, twenty-second and seventieth—in each there are forty-four letters; in the sixth verse there are forty-six letters, in the twenty-ninth verse there are forty-five letters and in each of the remaining verses there are thirty-two letters.

(3) In this chapter **'Uvāca'** (said) has been used seven times, **'Sañjaya Uvāca'** twice three times **'Śrībhagavānuvāca' 'Arjuna Uvāca'** twice.

Metres Used in the Second Chapter

Out of the seventy-two verses of this chapter the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, twentieth, twenty-second, twenty-ninth and seventieth these eight verses are of **'Upajāti'** metre. In the first quarter of the fifty-second and sixty-seven verses 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'na-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the twelfth, twenty-sixth and thirty-second verses and in the third quarter of the sixty-first and sixty-third verses 'ra-gaṇa' being used there is **'ra-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the thirty-sixth and fifty-sixth verses 'bha-gaṇa' being used there is **'bha-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the seventy-first verse and in the third quarter of the thirty-first verse 'ma-gaṇa' being used there is **'ma-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the forty-sixth verse 'sa-gaṇa' being used there is **'sa-vipulā'** metre; in the first and third quarters of the thirty-fifth verse 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'jātipakṣa-vipulā'** metre; in the forty-seventh verse in the first quarter 'bha-gaṇa' and in the third quarter 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'saṁkīrṇa-vipulā'** metre. The remaining forty-nine verses are possessed of the right **'pathyā-vaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

Śrī Hariḥ

THIRD CHAPTER

Introduction

The teaching of the Gītā is based on man's experience. While starting this gospel (from 2/11) Lord Kṛṣṇa first of all clarifies that the body and the soul are totally different from each other. The body is transitory, unreal, limited and perishable while the soul is eternal, real, omnipresent and imperishable. Therefore one should neither feel sad at the destruction of the perishable nor should have a desire to maintain the imperishable – this is discrimination. This discrimination is inevitable in all the three disciplines of Action, Knowledge and Devotion. When a man discriminates the self from the body, the desire for salvation is aroused. Not to speak of salvation even the desire for heaven etc. is aroused when a man regards his own self as different from the body. Therefore, the Lord starts His gospel with discrimination.

This topic of discrimination begins with the eleventh verse of the second chapter and continues upto the thirtieth verse. The Lord instead of using the philosophical terminology has used simple terms to enable the people to understand the topic easily. It means that every person deserves God-Realization because the humna body has been bestowed upon us only to realize Him. So every human being can realize God by giving due importance to discrimination.

In this topic even the term 'intellect' has not been used by the Lord. In order to distinguish the real from the unreal, the imperishable from the perishable, the eternal from the transitory and the soul (spirit) from the body, there is need only for discrimination rather than intellect. Discrimination is beyond intellect. As Prakṛti (Nature) and Puruṣa (spirit) both are beginningless (Gītā 13/19), so is the discrimination which distinguishes the real from the unreal. This discrimination has been bestowed upon all creatures by God and it is revealed in the intellect. Birds and beasts also know what should or should not be eaten. Even trees and creepering plants feel hot and cold and experience the favourable and the unfavourable circumstances. Human beings are specially endowed with this discrimination which can release them from the bondage of birth and death and leads them to eternal quietude and bliss.

When this discrimination is aroused i.e., when a man can distinguish between the spirit and the body, his affinity for the world including senses, mind and intellect is renounced and his intellect becomes purified and equanimous.

In the Discipline of Action the resolute intellect is single (Gītā 2/41). When a man firmly resolves that he has to attain salvation, favourable or unfavourable circumstances cause no obstacles and thus he attains equanimity without making any efforts. When a man resolves to attain God-Realization, his attachment and attraction to the world begins to disappear. Attachment to pleasures and prosperity is the main obstacle to the attainment of the resolute intellect (Gītā 2/44).*

Having laid emphasis on the resolute intellect in the Discipline of Action, the Lord asks Arjuna specially to perform his duty with equanimity. He declares, "You have a right to action alone but never at all to its fruit' (2/47); "Perform your duty being steadfast in

* In the Discipline of Knowledge there is predominance of discrimination, in the Discipline of Devotion there is pre-dominance of reverence and faith while in the Discipline of Action there is predominance of resolute intellect. But it does not mean that in the Discipline of Action there are no discrimination, reverence and faith. What it means is that resolute intellect predominates. Similarly in the Disciplines of Knowledge and Devotion also there is resolute intellect.

Yoga" (2/48) viz., equanimity. The Lord also declares, "Far lower than the Yoga of wisdom is action" (2/49) i.e., action performed for its fruit is far inferior to the Yoga of wisdom (equanimity). He further declares, "Seek thou refuge in equanimity." Then He declares, "Endowed with wisdom (evenness of mind), one casts off during this life both good and evil deeds; therefore devote thyself to Yoga; Yoga is skill in action" (2/50).

Arjuna had already made up his mind not to fight. So in the thirty-first verse of the first chapter he said, "I do not foresee any good in slaying my kith and kin." Then in the forty-fifth verse he says, "What a great sin have we resolved to commit in striving to slay our own people!" In the fifth verse of the second chapter Arjuna says, " It is better to live by begging than to slay these honoured teachers (elders)." In the third verse of the second chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa ordered Arjuna to arise shaking off this petty faint-heartedness while Arjuna declared his determination not to fight in the ninth verse of the second chapter.

It is a fact that a hearer can't understand what a preacher preaches if he is already full of prejudices. That is why Arjuna could not have a thorough grasp of the topic explained to him by Lord Kṛṣṇa.

He could not make out the real meaning of Lord Kṛṣṇa's words. They appeared to him to be ambiguous and confusing. So Arjuna puts the question to Lord Kṛṣṇa in the next two verses in order to get his doubt cleared.

अर्जुन उवाच

ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।
तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥१॥
व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे ।
तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥२॥

arjuna uvāca
jyāyasī cetkarmaṇaste matā buddhirjanārdana
tatkiṁ karmaṇi ghore māṁ niyojayasi keśava
vyāmiśreṇeva vākyena buddhiṁ mohayasīva me
tadekaṁ vada niścitya yena śreyo'hamāpnuyām

Arjuna said:

If you think that knowledge is superior to action, O Janārdana (Kṛṣṇa), why then do You urge me to do this savage deed, O Keśava (Kṛṣṇa)? 1

With an apparently confused utterance You seem to bewilder my mind; therefore, tell me definitely the one principle by which I may attain the highest good or bliss. 2

Comment:

'Janārdana'— By this term Arjuna means to say that as God fulfils desires of His devotees He will undoubtedly fulfil his desire also.

'Jyāyasī cetkarmaṇaste matā buddhirjanārdana tatkiṁ karmaṇi ghore māṁ niyojayasi keśava'—It's a common human weakness that he puts queries to others with a view to getting a response which would support his own views. It is cowardice because valour consists in carrying out the instructions of the preacher whether they are favourable or hostile. It is because of this weakness or cowardice that he experiences difficulty in unfavourable circumstances. When he finds

himself unable to face the unfavourable circumstances, he disguises himself as a good man i.e., the evil disguises itself as a virtue. It is very difficult to renounce this sort of evil. In the case of Arjuna also the evil of the renunciation of his duty has disguised itself as a virtue of non-violence. So he regards knowledge as superior to action and asks Lord Kṛṣṇa why he urges him to do the savage deed of fighting.

The Lord in the thirty-ninth verse of the second chapter mentioned equanimity (evenness of mind) but Arjuna took it to be knowledge. Therefore he tells the Lord, that He had already told him, "This, which has been taught to thee, is wisdom concerning Sāṅkhyayoga (Discipline of Knowledge); now listen to the wisdom concerning Karmayoga (Discipline of Action); endowed with which, thou shalt cast off the bondage of action." He had also told him, "Action is far inferior to the Discipline of Wisdom (Knowledge)" (2/49). Thus if according to the Lord knowledge is superior to action, He should not urge him to be engaged even in virtuous actions such as oblation, charity and penance etc., which are sanctioned by the scriptures. But still He is urging him to do the savage deed of the slaughter of warriors in the war. Why ?

First Arjuna, filled with enthusiasm, ordered Lord Kṛṣṇa to place his chariot between the two armies so that he could observe the warriors, eager for battle. But when Lord Kṛṣṇa, having placed the chariot between the two armies infront of Bhīṣma and Droṇa and other kings, asked Arjuna to behold those Kurus assembled there, his delusion, because of his attachment to his kinsmen, was aroused. So he thought knowledge to be superior to action as in the case of knowledge a man has not to perform such savage deeds as the slaughter of warriors in a war. So Arjuna asks Lord Kṛṣṇa why he urges him to perform such a savage deed.

Here the term 'Buddhiḥ' has been takes in the sense of knowledge, otherwise he would not have put this question. If Arjuna had understood 'equanimity' by the term 'Buddhiḥ', then the Lord's statement would have not appeared as confusing. The reason is that the Lord in the forty-eighth verse of the second chapter had already asked him to perform action being steadfast in equanimity. Using the term 'confusing words' will be purposeful only when there might have been two contentions in the mind of Arjuna and only then this question might arise "If you consider knowledge superior to action then why do you urge Me to this savage action? In the third chapter in response to Arjuna's question Lord Kṛṣṇa declares that in this world there are–Disciplines two the Discipline of Knowledge and the Discipline of Action. It means that Arjuna took the meaning of the term 'Buddhiḥ' to be knowledge.

A striver can receive the correct answer to his question, only if he puts it with faith and reverence. Arjuna has full faith in Lord Kṛṣṇa and holds him in reverence. Therefore, his question shows that he is even prepared to perform the savage deed of fighting in order to attain salvation.

'Vyāmiśreṇeva vākyena buddhiṁ mohayasīva me'– Arjuna means to say that sometimes he asks him to perform his duty (2/48) while sometimes He asks him to seek refuge in knowledge (2/49). Thus with an apparently confused utterance He seems to bewilder his mind i.e., he is not able to understand whether he should perform his duty or take refuge in knowledge.

Here the use of the term 'Eva' (As it were) two times shows Arjuna's reverence for Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is because of his reverence for the Lord that he regards the utterence of the Lord as true, thinking that He is not bewildering his mind. But because of his lack of understanding, the Lord's utterance seems to him to be perplexing and it bewilders his mind. Had the Lord bewildered his mind, who would have removed his delusion?

'Tadekaṁ vada niścitya yena śreyo'hamāpnuyām'— Arjuna requests Lord Kṛṣṇa to tell him decisively one

principle either of action or of knowledge by which he may attain the highest good or bliss. Arjuna is repeating the same request which he had already mentioned "Tell me decisively what is good for me" (2/7).

Link:—Now the Lord in the next three (third, fourth and fifth) verses answers the questions put in the first two verses.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

लोकेऽस्मिन्द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानघ ।
ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥ ३ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

loke'smindvividhā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayānagha
jñānayogena sāṅkhyānāṁ karmayogena yoginām

The blessed Lord said:

O sinless Arjuna, in this world a twofold path has been enunciated by Me before, the path of Knowledge for men of renunciation (Sāṅkhyayogī) and the path of Action for men of action (Karmayogī). 3

Comment:

[Arjuna did not want to fight. So he misunderstood the term 'Buddhi' (intellect) which stands for equanimity but he took it as knowledge. But the Lord had already used the terms 'Buddhi' and 'Buddhiyoga' for equanimity (2/39, 49 etc). Therefore here also Lord Kṛṣṇa is describing equanimity which can be acquired by both the Disciplines of Knowledge and Action].

'Anagha'—The question put by Arjuna how to attain to the highest good or bliss shows his freedom from sin because the keen desire to attain bliss destroys all the sins of a striver.

'Loke'smindvividhā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayā'— Here the term 'Loke' denotes human body because both the Disciplines of Knowledge and Action can be practised only in human life.

The term 'Niṣṭhā' stands for equanimity which can be attained either through the Discipline of Knowledge or the Discipline of Action. In order to distinguish the two, the Lord in the thirty-ninth verse of the second chapter declared, "This is equanimity concerning Sāṅkhya which has been taught to you (from the eleventh to the thirtieth verses). Now listen to the equanimity concerning Yoga (Discipline of Action) (from the thirty-ninth to the fifty-third verses)".

The term 'Purā' also denotes time immemorial as well as the immediate past. Here it has been used in the latter sense i.e., in the preceding chapter when the doubt arose in Arjuna's mind. In both the Disciplines which have already been described in the preceding chapter there is no mention of the renunciation of actions.

Something Remarkable

Here Lord Kṛṣṇa has mentioned two Disciplines— the Discipline of Sāṅkhya (Knowledge) and the Discipline of Yoga (Action). Corresponding to the two types of Disciplines there are two types of 'Puruṣas' in this world (Gītā 15/16). They are the perishable (mortal world) and the imperishable (immortal self). To remain equanimous in success and failure, gain and loss of the perishable is known as the Discipline of Action while having a disinclination for the perishable and being established in the imperishable is the Discipline of Knowledge. But above these two there is the Supreme Person who is beyond the perishable and is superior to

the imperishable as described in the scripture and the Veda (15/18). Thus whole hearted surrender to the Lord is called the Discipline of Devotion. Therefore, in the Discipline of Action there is predominance of the perishable, in the Discipline of Knowledge there is predominance of the imperishable while in the Discipline of Devotion there is predominance of God (Supreme Person).*

The state of 'Niṣṭhā' (Equanimity) can be attained by the strivers either through knowledge or through Action but identification with the Lord is not their own (Niṣṭhā). In Sāṅkhya state the strivers experience distinctly the existence of their own selves as well as that of the world and they try to cut asunder the affinity for the world. The Karmayogī offers to the world everything (including even his body) that he has derived from it and removes affinity from the world. In this way both of them get established in their true form– the Self. But in the state of identification with God, the striver in the beginning, does not feel the existence of God but he believes that there exists something unique (God) which is above and apart from the Self as well as the world. Thus he accepts God with a firm belief and faith and dedicates himself to Him. Therefore in Sāṅkhya and Yoga there is predominance of 'knowing' where as 'accepting' (Faith) is of much import in identification with God.

There is no difference between 'knowing' and 'accepting'. 'Accepting' is equally indubitable (firm) as 'knowing' is. There is no scope for debating in an accepted thing. A child takes is mother to be its own. No doubt ever cropsup in its mind. Therefore in Gītā wherever the term 'knowing' has been used with reference to Bhaktiyoga, it should be taken as 'accepting'. Similarly in connection with Jñānayoga and Karmayoga, the term 'accepting' should be taken to represent 'knowing'.

The state of equanimity depends on the resources (disciplines) of the Jñānayogī and Karmayogī but the identification with God depends entirely on the grace of God and so does the devotee.

The Discipline of Devotion has been described in the Gītā time and again. In this chapter also the Lord having described the Disciplines of Knowledge and Action, describes the Discipline of Devotion in the thirtieth verse by declaring, "Surrender all actions to Me." Similarly in the fifth chapter also having described the two Disciplines, in the tenth verse He declares, "The knower of Truth performs actions offering them to God," while at the end of the chapter He declares that He is the enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities and so on.

'Jñānayogena sāṅkhyānām'— These are the modes of Nature which are acting on the modes (Gītā 3/28) and so a striver is not attached to them. Thus by thinking so, when a striver renounces the pride of doership in all the actions, it is known as the Discipline of Knowledge.

At the beginning of the gospel of the Gītā while describing the Sāṅkhyayoga (the Discipline of Knowledge) the Lord discriminated the imperishable self from the perishable body by terming them as 'Sat' (Real) and 'Asat' (Unreal) (Gītā 2/16).

'Karmayogena yoginām'—The Discipline of Action consists in performing one's duty according to one's caste, stage of life, nature and circumstances, according to the ordinance of the scriptures, renouncing attachment to it and desire for its fruit and remaining equanimous in success and failure.

The Lord has predominantly described the Discipline of Action in the forty-seventh and forty-eighth verses of the second chapter. In the forty-seventh verse there is the mention of the principle of the Discipline of Action while in the forty-eighth verse there is the description of the method of performing the action.

* In fact in both Karmayoga and Jñānayoga our relation with God remains established. God Himself has prescribed these disciplines (Yogas), for the salvation of man. The strivers following these two disciplines carry out the rules prescribed by God. The only thing is that the striver following these two disciplines does not totally depend upon God.

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।
न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥ ४ ॥

na karmaṇāmanārambhānnaiṣkarmyaṁ puruṣo'śnute
na ca saṁnyasanādeva siddhiṁ samadhigacchati

Not by non-performance of actions does a man attain actionlessness; nor by mere renunciation does he attain perfection. 4

Comment:

'Na karmaṇāmanārambhān-naiṣkarmyaṁ puruṣo'śnute'— In the Discipline of Action performance of action is inevitable because for the sage who wishes to attain Yoga, action is said to be the means (6/3).*

A man has an impetus for action which can be pacified by the performance of actions without having any desire for fruits. If a striver performs actions having a desire for fruits, this impetus is not pacified, it is rather enhanced.

'Naiṣkarmyaṁ aśnute'— When a striver performs his duty without any desire for fruit, he attains to the state of actionlessness i.e., he is released from the bondage of action. Such actions don't bear fruit in the same way as the roasted or the boiled seed loses its power to sprout. Such actions lose their power of involving a man in the bondage of birth and death.

A man can renounce the desire when he perform actions only for the welfare of others because actions have affinity for the world while the affinity of the self is for God. So long as he performs actions for himself, he can't renounce desire and as long as he does not renounce desire, he can't attain to the state of actionlessness.

'Na ca saṁnyasanādeva siddhiṁ samadhigacchati'—In the first half of this verse the Lord has declared that a Karmayogī does not attain the state of actionlessness by non-performance of actions. In the second half He declares that a Sāṅkhyayogī (the follower of the Discipline of Knowledge) does not attain perfection viz., the state of actionlessness by mere renunciation of action.

It is necessary for a striver to renounce the sense of doership in order to attain perfection. So a Sāṅkhyayogī (follower of the Discipline of Knowledge) instead of renouncing the performance of action must renounce egoism.

In Sāṅkhyayoga actions can be performed and they can also be renounced to a certain extent, but in Karmayoga (Discipline of Action), action is necessary, it is said to be the means to attain to Yoga viz., perfection (Gītā 6/3).

A Vital Fact

The Gītā teaches a man how to attain spiritual perfection by performing one's duty. It inspires him to perform actions rather than to renounce them. So the Lord lays emphasis on performing actions in both the Disciplines of Action and Knowledge.

It is natural that when a striver aims at salvation, he gets tired of the worldly affairs and wants to renounce those affairs. Similarly Arjuna also being tired of actions asks Lord Kṛṣṇa why He is urging him to be engaged in this terrible action of waging the war when both the Disciplines of Action and Knowledge lead to equanimity. But the Lord orders Arjuna to perform actions in both the Disciplines. In the Discipline of Action He orders him to perform action by being even-minded (Gītā 2/48) while in the Discipline of Knowledge he orders him to fight (Gītā 2/18). Therefore, the Lord urges people to perform actions rather than to renounce them. But the Lord asks them to renounce desire and attachment which are the poisonous elements in actions.

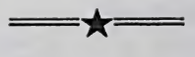
A striver instead of renouncing the performance of actions should renounce

* If he does not perform action, how will he come to know whether he remained equanimous in success and failure or not ?

his attachment to them. Yogīs (men of action), having abondoned attachment perform actions only by the body, mind, intellect or merely by the senses in order to render service to the world without any selfish motive (Gītā 5/11). In the Discipline of Knowledge there is predominance of the discrimination between the real and the unreal. Therefore, a Jñānayogī assumes that it is the modes which are acting on the modes i.e., all the actions are performed by the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., while he does nothing at all (Gītā 3/28, 5/8-9).

All the strivers have an experience that as soon as a keen desire for salvation is aroused in them, they have a disinclination for actions, things and persons (members of the family). But being attached to the body they have a desire for rest which is an obstacle to their progress. Generally strivers have an opinion that they can progress in the spiritual field by renouncing actions, things and company of people. But the fact is that renouncement of the attachment to actions, things and people is the important factor. In the Discipline of Knowledge it is difficult to renounce attachment without a keen dispassion. But in the Discipline of Action attachment is easily renounced by performing actions for others even without a keen dispassion.

In the Gītā it is also mentioned that a striver may practise spiritual discipline in solitude. But in solitude a Sāttvika (virtuous) man devotes his time in being busy with spiritual practice and adoration, a Rājasa (passionate) person spends it in projections and distractions, while a Tāmasa (ignorant) man wastes it in sleep, indolence and heedlessness. Therefore, a striver should have an inclination to dwell in solitude in order to devote his time and energy to the spiritual activities but he should perform his mundane duty also very promply without being attached to it. He should be attached neither to people nor to inaction. Detachment leads a striver to salvation very quickly. In fact external solitude is not the real solitude because the body is also a fragment of the world. Therefore real solitude consists in renouncing affinity with the world i.e., in renouncing egoism and attachment.



न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत्।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥ ५ ॥

na hi kaścitkṣaṇamapi jātu tiṣṭhatyakarmakṛt
kāryate hyavaśaḥ karma sarvaḥ prakṛtijairguṇaiḥ

For no one can remain even for a moment without performing action; everyone is made to act helplessly by the impulses born of nature. 5

Comment:

'Na hi kaścitkṣaṇamapi jātu tiṣṭhatyakarmakṛt'— In the Disciplines of Action, Knowledge and Devotion no striver can ever remain without performing actions. Hence the terms 'Kaścit' (Anyone), 'Kṣaṇam' (A moment) and 'Jātu' (Verily) are uncommon. Here the term 'Kaścit' denotes that no one whether he is wise or ignorant can remain without performing action. Though a wise man has no relation with his so-called body, yet actions are constantly performed by it. The term 'Kṣaṇam' denotes that a man does not assume that he performs actions constantly but he can't remain without performing action even for a moment so long as he assumes his affinity for the body. The term 'Jātu' denotes that a man can't remain without performing action in any state such as wakefulness, sleep, sound sleep and unconsciousness. The Lord explains its reason by the term 'Avaśaḥ' (Helplessly) in the second half of the verse by declaring that

he has to act hlplessly by the impulses born of nature. Nature is kaleidoscopic. A striver has to do nothing for himself. He has to perform actions sanctioned by the scriptures for the welfare of others. So far as forbidden actions are concerned, they can't be performed by the striver because his aim is God-Realization.

Many people regard only those actions as actions which are performed by the gross body. But according to the Gītā the activities undertaken by the body, speech or mind are also regarded as actions (Gītā 18/15). Only those actions, whether physical or mental to which a man is attached lead him to bondage.

Generally people regard their professions such as business, service or teaching and nursing of children etc., as actions but they don't consider eating. drinking, sleeping, waking and thinking etc., actions. So when they renounce their profession, they think that they are not performing actions. But it is an egregious error on their part. All the activities performed by the physical body for the purpose of earning a living, actions performed by the subtle body like sleeping and thinking and trance performed by the causal body are all regarded as actions. So long as a man has egoistic notion and attachment to the body, the activities performed by the body are actions because the body is the evolute of nature and nature is never inactive. So a person having egoism and attachment to the body can't remain without performing action in either of the states either of activity or repose.

'Kāryate hyavaśaḥ karma sarvaḥ prakṛtijairguṇaiḥ'—Every one is made to act helplessly by the modes of nature because nature and its modes are ever active (Gītā 3/27, 13/29). Though the soul is inactive, detached, imperishable, uniform and unconnected, yet so long as it being attached to nature and its evolute – the gross, subtle and causal bodies wants to derive pleasure it remains helpless under the control of Nature (Gītā 14/5). This helplessness of the self under the control of Nature is due to affinity with Nature. This has also been mentioned in the eighth verse of the ninth chapter and the nineteenth verse of the eighth chapter.

Individual nature is moulded by tendencies and tendencies are born of modes and modes in their term evolve from Prakṛti. Therefore to be subjected to nature or modes or Prakṛti is one and the same thing. As a matter of fact subjection of the Prakṛti and its evolutes is the root-cause of each and every subjection. The same subjection on different occasions has been defined as subjection to time, nature, action and Prakṛti etc. So long as the self (soul) does not become free from nature and its modes i.e., does not realize God, it remains helpless under the control of modes, time, nature, pleasures and even persons, property etc. But when it transcends the modes of nature and realizes the self or God, it does not remain helpless, it attains freedom which is axiomatic.

Something Note-Worthy

There are two states of Prakṛti–active (gross) and inactive (subtle). Performance of action is the active state while remaining idle in sleep etc., is the inactive state. But even in the inactive state nature does not remain inactive, but activity goes on in its subtle form. When a person is awakened by some one, he says that he was aroused in half sleep. It proves that the process of sleep continued even in the inactive state. In the same way the activity continues in trance, dissolution and final dissolution etc., in its subtle form.

In fact Nature never remains inactive because it is kaleidoscopic. In the self (spirit or soul) there is no doership but having assumed Its affinity for bodies etc., the evolute of nature, It becomes helpless under the control of nature. It is because of Its helplessness that It, being a non-doer, assumes Itself as the doer. All the actions of the universe such as seeing, hearing breathing, digestion of food etc., are performed by nature. So is the case with the states of childhood and youth. But the

embodied soul is bound by regarding itself as the doer of some actions.

Nature constantly undergoes changes while in the purer self there is never any change. In fact the worldly things have no existence of their own. The kaleidoscopic heap seems to exist in the form of things. When a man assumes his affinity for things, he can't remain without performing actions even for a moment in any state. If a striver realizes that all the activities are confined to the things and he has not the least relation with them, then only can he get rid of this helplessness. A Karmayogī (follower of the Discipline of Action) gets rid of this helplessness by renouncing the desire and attachment to the kaleidoscopic things.

What ever has been said by the Lord here in this verse, has also been said in the eleventh verse of the eighteenth chapter when He declares, "It is indeed impossible for an embodied being to abstain from actions altogether."

Link:–In the preceding verse it has been mentioned that no one can remain even for a moment without performing action. To this one may raise the objection that a person can regard himself as free from action by forcibly suspending the functions of the senses. The answer comes in the next verse.

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन्।
इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते॥ ६॥

karmendriyāṇi saṁyamya ya āste manasā smaran
indriyārthānvimūḍhātmā mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate

He who, restraining the organs of action, sits thinking of the sense objects in mind, he of deluded understanding is said to be a hypocrite. 6

Comment:

'Karmendriyāṇi samyamya ya āste manasā smaran indriyārthān-vimūḍhātmā mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate'— Here the term 'Karmendriyāṇi' does not stand only for the five organs of action (speech, hand, foot, anus and generative organ) but also stands for the five sense-organs (ear, skin, eye, taste and nose) because actions can't be performed by the organs of action alone without sense-organs. Besides this if only the organs of action such as hand and foot etc., are restrained but the sense-organs such as ear and eye are not restrained hypocrisy is not fully proved.

In the Gītā, sense-organs have also been included within the organs of action. Therefore, in the Gītā only the term 'Karmendriya' rather than 'Jñānendriya' has been used. In the eighth and ninth verses of the fifth chapter the actions of the sense-organs such as seeing, hearing and touching etc., have also been included in the organs of action. It proves that in the Gītā the sense-organs are also included in the organs of action. According to the Gītā, the activities performed with the mind are also included in actions (Gītā 18/15). It means that every evolute of nature is active because nature is ever active.

Though the term 'Samyamya' means full control over senses, yet here it means only their outward restraint. The reason is that he who has completely controlled his senses, can't be called a hypocrite.

The man of deluded understanding (who can't distinguish the real from the unreal) restrains the senses forcibly from running after sense objects but thinks of the objects of enjoyment with his mind and assumes this state as actionless. Such a person is called a hypocrite. The reason is that outwardly he has restrained the organs and senses but because of egoism, attachment and desire he performs action by enjoying

pleasure while thinking of the objects of enjoyment.

The worldly pleasures can be enjoyed externally as well as internally. As the external pleasures leave their influence, so do the internal ones leave which are enjoyed by thinking of the objects of enjoyment viz., by being attached to them. The external pleasures can be renounced by applying discrimination thinking over the adverse consequences or in order to maintain the social decorum. But there is no such obstacle to the enjoyment of internal pleasures. A person goes on enjoying them with his mind and develops a false pride that he has renounced those pleasures. Thus the internal pleasures prove very fatal to him. Therefore, a striver should very carefully restrain his mind from thinking of the objects of enjoyment.

Arjuna also wants to renounce the performance of actions and asks Lord Krsna why He urges him to engage in the terrible deed. In response to his question the Lord replies that the person who, having renounced the actions externally, has egoism, attachment and desire etc., but thinks that he is not performing any action, is a hypocrite. It means that strivers instead of renouncing the performance of actions, should perform them promptly renouncing desire and attachment.

Link:–In the fourth verse the Lord laid emphasis on the performance of actions in both the Disciplines of Action and Knowledge. In the fifth verse He declard, "No one can remain even for a moment without performing action." In the sixth verse He said, "He who, restraining the organs of actions forcibly regards himself as actionless, is a hypocrite." It means that renunciation of actions is not true renunciation. Therefore, he in the next verse explains the mark of real renunciation.

यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।
कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥ ७ ॥

yastvindriyāṇi manasā niyamyārabhate'rjuna
karmendriyaiḥ karmayogamasaktaḥ sa viśiṣyate

But he who controlling the senses by the mind, O Arjuna, engages himself in the path of action with all the organs of action and sense, without attachment is superior. 7

Comment:

[The term 'Tu' (But) has been used in order to declare that such a follower of the Discipline of Action, free from attachment, is superior not only to the hypocrite but also to the follower of the Discipline of Knowledge].

'Arjuna'—The term 'Arjuna' means pure in nature. The Lord addressing him as Arjuna says that being pure in nature he should have no doubt about the performance of his duty.

'Yastvindriyāṇi manasā niyamya'—Here the terms 'Manasā' stands for all the inner senses–(mind, intellect faculty of reflection and ego) and the term 'Indriyāṇi' denotes all the ten organs of action and sense-organs. 'Controlling the senses by the mind' means that by applying discrimination a striver should realize that the self has no affinity for senses and mind. When the senses are controlled by the mind, they can be engaged in or deviated from any activity as the striver wishes.

Senses are controlled only when attachment to them is renounced totally. In the eleventh verse of the twelfth chapter also there is mention of control over senses for a Karmayogī. It means that a striver can follow the path of action only by controlling the senses.

In the preceding (sixth) verse Lord Krsna talked about the hypocrite who forcibly

restrains the senses while here in this verse He is talking of preventing the senses from indulging in forbidden actions and engaging them in actions which are sanctioned by the scriptures. When the actions are performed according to the scriptural injunctions, senses are automatically controlled.

'Asaktaḥ'— A man is attached to (i) actions, and (ii) their fruit. It is attachment and not actions or their fruit, that is the root of all evils. Attachment is the main stumbling block to perfection. So a striver instead of renouncing actions, should renounce attachment. He can be free from attachment when he, without regarding the body, senses, mind and intellect as his or for him, starts performing his duty promptly for the welfare of the world by considering them the world's and for the world. By doing so his attachment to the fruit of actions automatically perishes.

All the actions including thinking and trance have nothing to do with the self (Gītā 5/11). Though the self is naturally unattached, yet by developing attachment It gets attached to the world. The real merit of a Karmayogī consists in being free from attachment. Freedom from attachment means having no desire for the fruit of actions.

A common man performs actions in order to fulfil his desire while a striver performs actions having an aim of renouncing attachment. Such a striver has been called here 'Asaktaḥ' (unattached).

A striver following the path of action, can renounce attachment and desire for fruit more easily than the striver who follows the path of knowledge because a Karmayogī, only through disinterested actions without any other means, can be free from attachment and desire for fruit while a Jñānayogī, in order to do away with his sense of egoism and attachment, has to follow the path of action i.e., he has to perform actions without having any desire for fruit (5/6, 15/11). The reason is that unless dispassion is developed and body consciousness is removed, Sāṅkhyayoga is difficult to practise without having practised Karmayoga before hand. Through the practice of Karmayoga a Sāṅkhyayogī gets completely detached and then through the practice of Jñānayoga he attains perfection. As soon as a Karmayogī renounces attachment, he attains equanimity. Therefore, the Lord declares that actions need not be renounced but they should be performed without attachment. It is attachment which needs to be renounced. In Karmayoga (Discipline of Action) action is ever performed for the welfare of others while 'Yoga' (union) is for one's own self. Arjuna considers action for himself, therefore, he thinks that fighting is a terrible action. So the Lord clarifies that it is attachment to action, rather than action, which is terrible.

'Karmendriyaiḥ karmayogam ārabhate'— As the term 'Indriyāṇi' stands for the ten senses, so does the term 'Karmendriyaiḥ' denote the ten senses. If they are taken as the five organs of action alone, such as hand, foot and speech etc., how will actions be performed without seeing, hearing and thinking? Therefore, all the internal and external senses and organs, by which actions are performed, are included in 'Karmendriyaiḥ.'

When an action is performed for the welfare of others without any selfish motive, it is called 'Karmayoga' or the Discipline (Path) of Action. When a person performs actions for himself, he is attached to the actions and their fruit. But when he performs them for others, the actions and their fruit are related to others while he is related to God i.e., he realizes his real relation with God which is eternal. Thus performance of one's duty according to one's caste and circumstances etc., selflessly is the beginning of Karmayoga (Discipline of Action).

Strivers following the Discipline of Action are of two types:—

(i) Those who are interested in performing actions but their main aim is to attain salvation. Such strivers need not start new actions. They have to make proper use of

the available circumstances.

(ii) Those who are more interested in rendering service to others, in providing comfort to others and in improving the society than in attainment of salvation. Such strivers can start performing new actions with the aim of doing away with their attachment.

In the Gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to make a proper use of the available circumstances because Arjuna had a keen desire to attain the highest good i.e., to attain bliss or salvation (Gītā 2/7; 3/2; 5/1).

'Sa viśiṣyate'— He, who performs actions for the welfare of others, having renounced his selfishness and fruit for action, is superior are directed towards the service of the world. All his possessions and body are also for the service of others. His selflessness is of such degree that his ego (of the sense of rendering service) is completely annihilated. Thus he becomes totally detached and liberated.

When a striver resolves to attain salvation, he wants to renounce actions by regarding them as the stumbling blocks to salvation. But the fact is that it is not the action but it is the selfish motive in the performance of actions which is an obstacle. Therefore, the Lord declares that the person, who without attachment performs action for the welfare of others, is superior to those hypocrites who restrain the organs of action but think of the sense-objects in mind. Even a person who performs action in order to receive its reward such as heaven etc., is superior to a hypocrite. Then there is no doubt that a Karmayogī who performs actions for the welfare of others without having any selfish motive is superior. At the beginning of the fifth chapter Arjuna asks Lord Kṛṣṇa to tell him for certain which one of the two, renunciation of actions or their unselfish performance is better. Lord Kṛṣṇa replies that both lead to salvation but unselfish performance of action is better than its renunciation. Similarly, here also he declares a Karmayogī, who performs actions for the welfare of others selflessly, to be superior.

Link:–In response to Arjuna's question why the Lord was urging him to such a dreadful action as warfare. He replied, "No one can ever remain even for a moment without performing action." Then He explained that he who, restraining the organs of action, thinks of the sense objects is a hypocrite while he who engages himself in action without expecting any reward is superior. Now in the next verse He orders Arjuna to perform his allotted duty.

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ॥ ८ ॥

niyatam kuru karma tvaṁ karma jyāyo hyakarmaṇaḥ
śarīrayātrāpi ca te na prasiddhyedakarmaṇaḥ

Do thou perform thy allotted duty, for action is superior to inaction and even the maintenance of the body would not be possible for thee by inaction. 8

Comment:

'Niyatam kuru karma tvam'— A man is permitted to perform two types of actions–those as laid down in the scriptures such as fast and worship etc., and the allotted duty according to one's caste, order of life, nature and circumstance such as eating food, doing business, construction of a house and guiding a person who has lost his way and so on. A man can't perform all the actions as laid down in the scriptures, thoroughly. But he can very easily abandon the forbidden actions non-performance of prescribed actions is not very harmful. But

abandonment of forbidden actions such as falsehood, theft and violence etc., is very beneficial. When he abandons the forbidden actions, the actions sanctioned by the scriptures are automatically performed by him.

In the Discipline of Action, an action according to one's caste and sanctioned by the scriptures is one's allotted duty whether it is terrible or mild. Here Lord Kṛṣṇa explains to Arjuna that as a Kṣatriya (member of the warrior class) it is his duty to fight (Gītā 18/43). Though the action seems involving violence and bloodshed, yet it is his allotted duty. In the second chapter also the Lord told him that having regard for his own duty he should not falter (Gītā 2/31). In fact 'Svadharma' (One's own duty) and 'Niyatakarma' (Allotted duty) both are one and the same. For Duryodhana being a member of the warrior class it was his duty to fight, yet it was not his allotted duty as being unjust he wanted to usurp the Pāṇḍava's kingdom. For him it was not a righteous and prescribed duty.

'Karma jyāyo hyakarmaṇaḥ'—The Lord in this verse is answering the question put in the first verse by using the term 'Jyāyaḥ' (Superior) with the same term. There Arjuna put the question why He was urging him to perform the terrible action of waging the war when according to Him knowledge was superior to action. In response to his question the Lord declared the person following the path of action to be superior to the person following the path of inaction. Thus Arjuna wants to escape the battle, while the Lord exhorts him to fight as it is his allotted duty. Therefore, the Lord in the eighteenth chapter declares, "One should not abandon the duty suited to one's nature even though it may be defective" (18/48) because by abandoning it, one is exposed to sin and one continues to be attached to it. Therefore, performance of allotted duty is superior to renunciation of actions. Performance of actions without attachment is far superior to those performed with attachment because by doing so affinity for actions is totally renounced. Therefore, the Lord in the first half of this verse orders Arjuna to perform his allotted duty without attachment while in the second half He declares that maintenance of the body would not be possible by inaction either:

In the Discipline of Action the Lord's main principle is "Action is superior to inaction." The same fact has been pointed out by the Lord when he declares, "Let not thy attachment be to inaction" (Gītā 2/47). The reason is that he who shirks his duty wastes his time in heedlessness, laziness and sleep or performs forbidden actions which mislead him to a downfall.

It is better to be detached from actions by performing them rather than through their non-performance. A person is in bondage due to desire, attachment, partiality etc., whether he performs them or not. In the path of action, if a striver has the aim to renounce desire, it can be renounced very easily through the performance of action for the good of others.

'Śarīrayātrāpi ca te na prasiddhyedakarmaṇaḥ'—Arjuna had a misconception in his mind that his affinity for actions would be automatically renounced, if he did not perform action. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa inspired him to perform actions by several pleas, one of the pleas was that even the maintenance of the body would not be possible by inaction.

As in the Discipline of Knowledge affinity for the world is renounced by discrimination, in the Discipline of Action affinity is renounced by performing one's duty sincerely and thoroughly. Therefore, the Discipline of Action should in no way be regarded as inferior to the Discipline of Knowledge. A Karmayogī, regarding the body as belonging to the world, applies it in rendering service to the world i.e., he has no sense of 'mineness' with it. He identifies the physical, subtle and causal bodies respectively with the gross, subtle and causal world while a Jñānayogī identifies himself with Brahma, the Absolute. Thus a Karmayogī identifies the insentient elements

while a Jñānayogī identifies the sentient ones.

A Vital Fact Pertaining to Spiritual Discipline

Generally strivers such as Arjuna commit an error that they insist on non-performance of actions. Secondly, while practising spiritual discipline they want favourable circumstances so that they may attain their aim quickly. But such a desire is a stumbling block to their spiritual progress.

The striver who wants to attain bliss easily and quickly is a pleasure–seeker rather than a striver, because by doing so he has an eye, not on the spiritual discipline but on its fruit. The result is that he gets tired of the spiritual discipline and thus attains his aim late. The striver, who has a single minded determination to attain bliss, is bent upon practising the spiritual discipline whole heartedly without thinking of the difficulties and duration, pleasure and pain. Not to talk of a striver, even a greedy merchant bears all hardships without caring for hunger and thirst etc., as long as customers continue to come and there is a good sale. Similarly a striver practises spiritual discipline with reverence and devotion without caring for comfort and even the bare necessities of life. He has a keen desire to attain his aim. He wails if he finds himself unable to overcome any obstacle in the path of the spiritual discipline while the striver, who derives pleasure out of the spiritual discipline, gets angry when he finds an obstacle in his way. The curiosity or desire of the former striver enhances every moment while the latter thinks of relaxing having attained the aim quickly. The former thinks that he has nothing to do except practising the spiritual discipline under all circumstances. So he applies his full power and attains bliss. But the latter, when he does not succeed quickly, may get disappointed. Therefore, a striver should attach more importance to the means rather than to the end, like Goddess Pārvatī who in the Rāmacaritamānasa declares, "I have a firm determination that I shall marry only Lord Śiva otherwise I shall remain unmarried even though millions of births may pass. I shall not disobey the preaching of sage Nārada even if Lord Śiva may ask Me to do so a hundred times" (1/81/5). Mother Pārvatī is not time conscious in her penance.

In this verse Lord Kṛṣṇa through Arjuna urges all strivers to perform their allotted duties very promptly by renouncing the desire for favourable circumstances and pleasures which are the main stumbling blocks to spiritual progress.

Link:–In the preceding verse Lord Kṛṣṇa declared that without performing action we cannot keep body and soul together. It proves that performance of action is essential. But actions lead to attachment and bondage. So how can a man be free from this bondage? The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।
तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥ ९ ॥

yajñārthātkarmaṇo'nyatra loko'yaṁ karmabandhanaḥ
tadarthaṁ karma kaunteya muktasaṅgaḥ samācara

The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice. Therefore, O son of Kuntī (Arjuna), perform action for that sake becoming free from all attachment. 9

Comment:

'Yajñārthātkarmaṇo'nyatra'—According to the Gītā every duty is 'Yajña' (Sacrifice). The term 'Yajña' includes sacrifice, charity, penance, oblation, pilgrimage, fast, study of the Vedas and all physical, mundane and spiritual actions. Professions such as business, service and teaching etc., sanctioned by the scriptures are also included in 'Yajña'. Other actions which are performed in order to comfort others and for the welfare of others are also included in the term 'Yajña'. Attachment perishes very quickly by performing actions for the sake of sacrifice and all the actions of a Karmayogī are dissolved (Gītā 4/23) i.e., they instead of leading the person to bondage reduce the stock of his past actions also to nothing.

In fact a man's inclination is judged by his aim rather than by his actions. As a business man's aim while having transaction is to earn money, and he is inclined towards money as soon as he stops his transaction, similarly, the striver who performs action for the sake of sacrifice, has the aim of God-Realization and as soon as the action is over, he is inclined towards God.

The people of different Varṇas (castes) have their allotted duties and actions. A Brāhmaṇa (a member of priest class) can depend on alms which is a source of his living, while it is not allowed for a Kṣatriya (a member of the warrior class). Similarly, performance of actions without having any desire for fruit is a man's own duty while performance of actions expecting their fruit is not his own duty. Similarly, the forbidden actions are also not included in one's own duty and so is the case with actions which are performed in order to gain pleasure, honour, praise and comfort etc*. Therefore a striver should take precaution lest the action should be performed with a selfish motive. In fact a striver is he who is ever on the alert.

If a person receives a visitor with open arms in order to leave a good impression of his gentleness upon him, it means that the action has been performed with a selfish motive. Therefore, such an action can't be called sacrifice. Similarly, if a person puts a question to the orator in a meeting or discourse in order to impress the orator and the audience, his action is not performed for the sake of sacrifice. It means that a striver should perform action by renouncing his selfish motive and desire.

A striver should not perform any action for pleasure and prosperity or even for the maintenance of the body. If actions are performed for the maintenance of the body, it means that there is a desire to live. The actions should be performed for the sake of sacrifice alone. Any action done for personal welfare leads to bondage. Indeed the supreme striver is he who performs actions for the welfare of others even without having a desire to attain salvation. The welfare of others also involves one's own welfare. Therefore, all the mundane and spiritual actions should be performed for the welfare of others.

The action which is performed for one's own self leads to bondage. Therefore, even the actions such as remembrance, reflection, meditation and even trance should be practised for the welfare of the world. Thus whatever a striver does with his physical, subtle and causal bodies does only for others, not for himself. By doing so, his affinity for the world is renounced and he is united with God. This is known as Karmayoga.

'Loko'yaṁ karmabandhanaḥ'—Only human beings are entitled to perform actions in the form of performing a duty (sacrifice) which has been described by

* When a man performs actions for himself, it means that he has a desire for the fruit of actions and where there is desire for the fruit of actions, there is the possibility of the performance of forbidden actions.

the Lord in the topic of the wheel of creation (3/14-16). He who performs actions with an interested motive is bound, while he, who performs actions for the welfare of others, performs his duty and attains liberation from bondage. It is not action but attachment and selfishness which bind him.

'Tadartham karma kaunteya muktasangaḥ samācara'—Here the term 'Muktasaṅgaḥ' (Freedom from attachment) denotes that actions should be performed without entertaining the feeling of 'mine' and attachment to the actions, things, body, mind and intellect etc. If the feeling of 'mine' and attachment are renounced, actions are automatically performed for the welfare of others, and if a striver has no actions to perform, he automatically gets established in the self. Consequently, only the actions which are prescribed by the scriptures are performed by him.

The renunciation of duty out of indolence and heedlessness is declared to be of the nature of 'ignorance' (Gītā 18/7) which results in delusion i.e., such a person is born in the wombs of the deluded. He who abandons a duty because it is painful, performs the relinquishment of the passionate kind (Gītā 18/8) whose fruit is pain (Gītā 14/16). Therefore, here Lord Kṛṣṇa does not exhort Arjuna to renounce actions but He orders him to perform actions efficiently and enthusiastically renouncing selfishness, mineness, attachment, desire for fruit and partiality etc., according to the ordinance of the scriptures. Such relinquishment is regarded as one of the kind of 'goodness' (Gītā 18/9). The Lord Himself further declares that there is nothing in the three worlds that should be done by Him, yet He is engaged in action (3/22-23).

A person becomes slack in performing actions because of the two factors—(1) It is in the nature of human beings that they perform action with a view to reaping their fruit. But when according to the Discipline of Action he realizes that actions are to be performed without the desire for fruit, he thinks why he should perform actions. (2) When having started the action he realizes that it will bear adverse fruit, he thinks that he should not perform it.

A Karmayogī has neither any desire nor he hopes for the perishable fruit of action, he performs actions only in order to do good to the world. So there can't be any slackness in the performance of duty.

A Vital Fact

Generally a person performs an action promptly and efficiently, only if it serves his selfish motive. But such an action binds him. In order to be free from the bondage he should perform actions prescribed by the scriptures disinterestedly.

In the Discipline of Action all actions are performed for others. Who are others? Not only other beings and things but the so-called our own bodies — gross, subtle (senses, mind, intellect and life-breath) and causal (including 'ego') are also included in the term 'others'*. The reason is that the self (soul) is a fragment of sentient God while these bodies and things are the fragments of insentient 'Prakṛti' (Matter). All actions are performed through the evolutes of Nature such as body etc., and for the body and the world which are also evolutes of Nature, while the sentient neither undergoes actions nor actions are performed for the sentient. So actions can never be performed for the self. But when he (self) assumes the worldly insentient things such as body etc., as 'I' 'Mine' and 'for me', he performs actions for himself. By performing actions for others, attachment and the feeling

* Like the world the body, senses, mind and intellect are also different from us. Therefore, a Karmayogī without assuming them as his own, serves them. He does not let the body become sleepy, indolent, heedless, idle and pleasure-seeking. Thus he renders service to the body. He renders service to the senses by not allowing them to be engaged in worldly pleasures. He renders service to the mind by not allowing it to think of doing harm to others or thinking of sense objects or futile things. He serves the intellect by not allowing it to think of the duties of others. He serves all of them by having neither the feeling of mineness nor attachment.

of 'mine' perish easily.

Everybody can realize that the states of the body (childhood, youth etc.,) change but he himself remains the same. This unchanging self (soul) has its identity with God while the Kaleidoscopic body, senses mind and intellect etc., have their identity with the world. Whatever action is performed by us, is performed with body and senses etc., not by the self. This proves that we have nothing to do for overselves, we have to do only for the world. When we perform actions for ourselves, we are bound by those actions—"The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice."

The imperishable and unchanging self has no affinity for the perishable and changing body, senses, mind and intellect etc. Therefore, there is nothing one's own and for one's own self. We can do nothing without the help of the body etc., therefore we have to do nothing for the self. The self can never lack anything. Without lack there can arise no desire. Therefore, It needs nothing for Itself. In this way, when a man's affinity for actions and things is severed, if he is inclined towards knowledge he realizes the self. On the other hand, if he is inclined towards devotion, he attains to the state of exclusive devotion.

Link:–The Lord in the preceding verse declared, "The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice." Therefore, in order to be free from bondage, actions instead of being renounced, should be performed only in the spirit of performing a duty. The Lord confirms the same fact by producing the testimony in the next verses.

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥ १० ॥
देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥ ११ ॥

sahayajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā purovāca prajāpatiḥ
anena prasaviṣyadhvameṣa vo'stviṣṭakāmadhuk
devānbhāvayatānena te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ
parasparaṁ bhāvayantaḥ śreyaḥ paramavāpsyatha

At the beginning of creation the Creator created mankind attended with sacrifice and said,"By this shall ye propogate; let this provide you all the necessary requisites for sacrifice. 10

By this foster ye the gods and let the gods foster you; thus fostering each other you shall attain to the supreme good." 11

Comment:

'Sahayajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā purovāca prajāpatiḥ'— One who creates beings or things etc., it becomes his duty to preserve them. Brahmā is the creator and Lord of creation and so he always thinks of the preservation and salvation of creation. Thus he is known as 'Prajāpati' (The lord of creation).

At the beginning of creation Brahmā, the creator created man by providing him with power for performing actions and also bestowed upon him discrimination*. The right use of desirable and undesirable circumstances leads to salvation. Therefore the creator bestowed upon mankind

* Brahmā, the creator creates mankind with God's and power. So in fact God is the real creator of creation (Gītā 4 13; 17 23).

discrimination in order to enable them to make the right use of the favourable and unfavourable circumstances.

Beasts, birds and trees etc., even without having the power of discrimination, naturally do good (duty) to others; but by God's grace special power of discrimination has been bestowed upon mankind. So if a man does not perform forbidden actions by attaching importance to his discrimination, naturally actions for the welfare of others are performed by him.

Though the term 'Prajā' (Creation) stands for gods, sages, manes, mankind and other beings (beasts, birds, trees etc.) yet mankind is particularly responsible to rear all beings. Therefore, here the term 'Prajāḥ' stands for mankind.

This Discipline of Action has been functioning from time immemorial. In the third verse of the fourth chapter also the Lord by the term 'Purātanaḥ' declares that the same ancient Yoga has been taught to Arjuna by Him which was lost to the world by long lapse of time. The same fact has been pointed out here in this verse in a different way by the term 'Purā' (At the beginning) by declaring, "Not only I but also Brahmā at the beginning of creation having created men ordered them to follow the Discipline of Action." It means that this Discipline of Action has been going on from time immemorial, it is nothing new.

In the fourth chapter (from the twenty-fourth to the thirtieth verses) all the sacrifices for God-Realization through wealth, austerities, Yoga (spiritual exercise), vital force etc., have been described. Generally the term 'Yajña' is taken as oblation or sacrifice. But in the Gītā the term stands for all the prescribed actions as laid down in the scriptures. All the duties performed according to one's caste, order of life, religion, nature, time and circumstances etc., are included in the term 'Yajña'. The actions performed for the welfare of others are also included in yajña (sacrifice). It is a man's responsibility to perform such a sacrifice (duty).

'Anena prasaviṣyadhvameṣa vo'stviṣṭakāmadhuk'— Brahmā, the creator says to mankind, "By the performance of duty shall you propagate and by doing so you shall fulfil the earthly requirements in order to perform your duty."

Arjuna was not willing to perfom his duty. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa says to him that he should learn a lesson of performing his duty from the creator's words. By performing his duty for the welfare of others he will progress here as well as hereafter.

Performance of actions in a disinterested way leads to salvation while their performance with a selfish motive leads to bondage. Here is the topic of the performance of duty without having any desire for fruit. Therefore, the term 'Iṣṭakāma' does not stand for the desired material (the desire for fruit), it stands for the required material for sacrifice (duty).*

A Karmayogī (the follower of the Discipline of Action) is ever ready to render service or do good to others. Therefore, according to the ordinance of Brahmā, the creator, such a Karmayogī does not lack the required capacity and materials for rendering service to others and for the maintenance of his body. All this required material is easily available to him. According to the ordinance of Brahmā everybody has been offered this material in order to enable him to perform his duty.

In fact this human body has not been bestowed upon human beings to enjoy pleasures (Mānasa 7/44/1). Therefore, there is no mention in anyone of the scriptures that the man should enjoy worldly pleasures. The society also does not permit a person to

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* In the preceding verse Lord Kṛṣṇa declared. "The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice i.e., by actions performed with the desire for fruit". Further in the thirteenth verse He declares, "Those sinful ones who cook food for their own sake i.e., perform actions for fruit, verily eat sin". Thus in the preceding as well as the next verse there is mention of renunciation of the desire for fruit. So in the middle verses (tenth, eleventh and twelfth) also it should be interpreted as the renunciation of the desire for fruit. If the meaning of the term 'Iṣṭakāma' is taken as the desire for fruit, it does not fit this context, as such actions lead to bondage. So the term stands for the required material for sacrifice (performance of duty).

enjoy pleasures freely. On the other hand the scriptures as well as the society urge a man to bring comfort to others and to do good to them. It is mentioned in the scriptures that a father should foster his son but it is not mentioned that he is authorized to expect service from his son. Similar is the case with others such as son and wife etc.

A Karmayogī always wants to give but not to receive because the desire for fruit, besides being a stumbling block to salvation, is an obstacle to receiving worldly things. This is everybody's experience that no one wants to offer anything to a person who hankers after it. Therefore, Brahmā says that a man can attain the supreme good (salvation) by performing his duty in a disinterested manner without having any desire for reward.

In the expression 'Devānbhāvayatānena' the term 'Deva' denotes all beings such as men, gods, sages and manes etc., because the aim of the striver, following the path of action, is to nourish every being. So Brahmā, the creator orders men to offer sacrifice in the form of the performance of duty in order to foster and nourish other people for their advancement. Each man devoted to his own duty, attains perfection viz., salvation (Gītā 18/45). Men are free in the performance of their duty; so they should make a proper use of this freedom.

'Te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ'—Trees and plants etc., naturally bear flowers and fruits but their growth is luxuriant if they are tended properly. Similarly a man should perform his duty by nourishing and fostering the gods by offering worship and service to them. By doing so he is nourished by the gods with timely rain etc. But when he doesn't perform his duty properly, the gods are not properly nourished and so he has to face calamities such as deluge and drought etc.

'Parasparam bhāvayantaḥ'—This expression should not be interpreted as such that we should serve others only if they serve us. It should mean that we should perform our duty by serving others without taking any heed of what others do. He who cares for the duties of other people, deviates from his duty, and has a downfall. Moreover, it is beyond our power to force anyone to perform his duty. We have to perform our duty of fostering others and doing good to them to the best of our resources such as intellect, power, time and material etc. In that case our affinity for the insentient (Matter) will be totally renounced.

We have to serve all our relatives such as parents, wife, sons, brothers, brothers'wives etc., in a disinterested way by regarding the service as our obligatory duty according to the scriptural injunctions. We are born here to get out of debt by serving because we are indebted to them. It is an error on our part if we expect any reward from them or lay claim to them. We have to serve all beings but first preference should be given to those kith and kin who have a claim on our service.

It is an accepted fact that the body, senses, mind, intellect and possessions are neither ours nor for us. If we sincerely perform our respective duties, this will add immensely to the welfare of the world.

A Vital Fact Pertaining to Duty and Right

In the Discipline of Action a striver by performing his duty safeguards the right of others. It is the duty of a son to serve his parents and the parents have a right to expect such service. What is others' right is our duty. Therefore, every person should perform his duty in order to safeguard the right of others without paying heed to whether they perform their duty or not. A man deviates from his duty by thinking of the duty of others and has a downfall. Nowadays in families and society at large disquietude, conflicts, friction and disorder etc., are rampant. Their root is that people demand their rights but they don't perform their duty. Therefore, Brahmā, the creator preaches the gods and men that it is their duty to do good to each other.

'Śreyaḥ paramavāpsyatha'—

Generally people conceive that the statement, that the gods and men by fostering each other shall attain the supreme good, is an exaggeration. But in fact it is not so. If anyone is doubtful about it, he himself can translate this principle into practice and see the same result. As when the trust money is returned to the owner by a person he has not the least affinity for that money, similarly when we utilize the worldly things in rendering service to the world, our affinity to the world and the worldly things is renounced. As soon as this affinity is renounced, the supreme good is attained. Therefore, it is an error to take Brahmā's word as an exaggeration.

So long as a person performs actions for himself, he is bound by them, and his actions don't come to an end. But when he does nothing for himself, nothing remains to be done by him and he does not commit sin because desire is the root of sins (Gītā 3/37). Therefore, a striver in order to attain the supreme good (salvation), should perform his duty by renouncing attachment and the desire for fruit, according to the ordinance of the scriptures. By doing so, attainment of salvation is axiomatic.

Renunciation of one's desire leads to the welfare of the entire world. He, who enjoys pleasures being attached to them in order to satisfy his desire, performs an act of violence (downfall) for himself as well as for those who lack those materials because they are sad because of the shortage of those materials. Thus a pleasure-seeking person can't escape sins. On the other hand they get peace from those people who follow the spiritual path because every one can lay equal claim to spiritual property. Thus according to Brahmā, the creator if a man performs his duty renouncing desire and attachment, he can attain the supreme good viz., salvation without any doubt.

Here attainment of the supreme good has been specially mentioned for human beings rather than gods. The aim of the gods is not to attain salvation. But they offer rewards to men according to their actions, provide required material to them for performing actions and enjoy the reward for their good actions performed in the past. They don't provide the required material disinterestedly. But when even the vilest sinner can attain salvation; the gods can also attain salvation if they have a desire to do so. But generally their aim is to enjoy the heavenly pleasures, so they have no desire to attain salvation.

इष्टान्भोगान्हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।
तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥ १२ ॥

iṣṭānbhogānhi vo devā dāsyante yajñabhāvitāḥ
tairdattānapradāyaibhyo yo bhuṅkte stena eva saḥ

Fostered by sacrifice the gods will give you all the necessary ingredients. He who enjoys these objects without utilizing them in the service of others, is verily a thief. 12

Comment:

'Iṣṭānbhogānhi vo devā dāsyante yajñabhāvitāḥ'— Here the term 'Iṣṭabhoga' does not stand for the desired objects because in the preceding (eleventh) verse there is mention of attaining the highest good and this verse in related to that verse. Secondly, as long as a man has desire, he can't attain the highest good. So here this term means that the gods will supply him all the required material for the performance of sacrifice (duty).

Here the expression 'Yajñabhāvitāḥ devāḥ' means that the gods provide the required material to men by regarding it as their right (responsibility). Men are

indebted to them. So they have to perform sacrifice (duty).

'Tairdattānapradāyaibhyo yo bhuṅkte'— Brahmā used the expression 'Te devāḥ' for the gods because before him there were men, not gods. But here the term 'Ebhyaḥ' stands for nearness. For God every one is near Him (Gītā 7/26). It proves that the holy words from Divine lips begin here.

Here the term 'Bhuṅkte' does not stand only for eating but for enjoyments of all the objects (food, clothes, house and money etc.) required for the maintenance of the body.

We owe this body to our parents and it is they who have fostered it. For our knowledge we are grateful to our preceptors and sages. The gods have provided us with the material necessary for the performance of duty. The manes guide us how to provide ourselves with comforts. Beasts, birds, trees and creeping vines etc., sacrifice themselves in order to provide comfort to others and do good to them (though they are not aware of it). Thus whatever material, strength, ability, rank, authority, wealth and property we possess, we owe it all to others. So whatever we possess should be devoted to the service of others.

The body, senses, mind and intellect etc., are not ours, they have been received from the world. So if we want to enjoy the worldly pleasures by regarding them as our own, they lead us to bondage. But if we perform our duty by utilizing them in rendering service to the other people, from whom we have received them, without expecting any reward, we can get rid of the bondage.

Generally, the strivers think that if they render service to the worldly people, they will be attached to them and get entangled in the world. But the Lord's gospel proves that it is not service but desire which leads to bondage. So it is every man's duty, like the gods, to serve others and do good to them according to his resources. The Lord and gods don't expect more from him.

'Stena eva saḥ'— Here in the expression 'Saḥ stena' (He is a thief) the purpose of using the singular is to emphasise the fact that, he, who without performing his duty of giving the required objects (food, water, clothes etc.) to others, enjoys them all alone, is a thief.

The person who without paying the rightful due of others, enjoys the objects himself, is a thief; and so a thief is he who performs actions with a selfish motive in order to gain honour and praise etc. Such a person can never gain purity and peace of mind.

This body is neither different nor can be different from the world because it is a fragment of the world. Therefore, if a person assumes the body as his without assuming the world as his, this assumption gives birth to pairs of opposites such as attachment and aversion and also evil propensities such as pride, individuality and unevenness of mind etc. A striver following the path of action gets rid of the pairs of opposites such as attachment and aversion etc., easily because whatever such a striver does, he does for the welfare of the world. He even practises the spiritual discipline, not for his own salvation but for the salvation of the entire world. The reason is that if he regards his salvation different from the salvation of others, it means that he has unevenness of mind which is a stumbling block to his spiritual progress. He, who uses the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., which he has received from the world for his selfish motive, is dishonest.

An Important Fact Pertaining to Duty

According to the Indian culture a man's only aim is to attain salvation. Therefore, Brahmā, the creator at the beginning of creation urged men to perform their duty fostering one another without any selfish motive (Gītā 3/10).

The members of a family commit an error that they perform actions under the influence of desire, mineness, attachment and selfishness etc. So they have to suffer

here as well as hereafter. Here they fall a prey to quarrel, fight, envy and jealousy etc., while hereafter they have to reap the adverse fruit of the actions performed by them. When a person serves others in the hope of reward, he is attached to persons and things. This attachment leads him to bondage. A selfish man is not liked or praised by anyone. In the family, objects are concealed from a passionate and pleasure-seeking person. On the other hand if a person serves others with all his resources, he attains salvation and is also praised, honoured, comforted and supplied things even though he is unwilling to receive them. A Karmayogī has no desire to win honour or praise etc., because desires and pleasures bind him.

The desire for pleasure deviates a man from the performance of duty and is conducive to his downfall. So a striver, following the path of action should always think of doing good to others including the members of his family, without having any pride of doership. As a mother's milk is meant only for the child, similarly whatever material a man possesses, is only for others. Therefore a man should not regard the possessions as his own and for him. The possessions will perish but bondage in the form of attachment and feeling of mineness will prevail. So the Lord declares that he who enjoys the objects regarding them as his own, is a thief.

A man is indebted to the gods, sages, manes, birds, beasts, trees and creeping plants etc., because it is in their nature to serve him and do good to him. Therefore, five kinds of sacrifice (for sages, for gods, for creatures, for manes and for men) have been prescribed in the scriptures. By this five fold sacrifice (duty) he can satisfy all of them. Therefore having shouldered this responsibility by making use of his freedom he can attain to the supreme good.

The gods etc., do their duty. If men don't perform their duty, there is commotion not only among the gods but in the entire universe. Consequently there are natural calamities such as deluge, drought, earthquake and famine etc. The Lord in the Gītā (3/23-24) declares, "If ever I did not engage Myself in action, unwearied, men in everyway would follow My path and I should be the creator of disordered life as well as of destruction of beings" (Gītā 3/23-24). As the whole bullock cart faces a series of jerks when even a small portion of the wheel is damaged, similarly even if a single person deviates from his duty, he leaves an adverse effect on the entire universe. On the contrary, as the recovery of the diseased limb makes the whole body healthy, similarly the person who performs his duty sincerely and efficiently, does good to the entire universe.

Brahmā, the Creator, ordered both the gods and men to perform their duty. The gods follow a certain code of conduct. But men ignore it due to their folly. They start laying a claim to the material which has been bestowed upon them for the welfare of others. Moreover, they have been endowed with freedom so that by making proper use of it, they may be free from the bondage of actions, they have been placed in since infinite births. But by misusing that freedom they get attached to actions and their fruit. Consequently they get entangled and are heading for suffering in numberless future births. Therefore, men should serve all beings such as God, gods, sages, manes and men etc., with all the resources and possessions which have been bestowed upon them.

Question:— How will a Karmayogī keep his body and soul together if everything is to be utilized in the service of others?

Answer:—— In fact this question arises only when a man assumes the identity of the self with the body. A Karmayogī does not accept his affinity for the body. He regards the body as the world's and, therefore, serve the world with it. He has an eye on the imperishable self rather than on the perishable body. Only the person who is mindful of his body, can raise such a question.

As long as a person is eager to enjoy worldly pleasures, he is eager to remain alive

and fears death. A Karmayogī has no desire for pleasures, all his actions are performed in order to render service to others, so he does not care even to live alive. The question how he will maintain his body, does not arise in his mind. In fact he who performs his duty disinterestedly for the welfare of the world is an asset to the world which provides for his living. In the domain of God when there is provision for the maintenance of the bodies of ordinary creatures such as beasts, birds, insects, germs, trees and plants etc., whose lives are for the good of others, how is it possible that there will be no provision for the maintenance of the body of the striver who serves all beings with all his resources including his body?

The preserver Lord by His grace has equally bestowed upon beings the material required for the maintenance of their bodies. The mother is a living example to prove this fact. The mothers' breasts where there is blood in abundance are filled with sweet and nourishing milk as soon as a baby is born. Whether it is through the grace of God or through fate a man gets the things necessary for his living. So there is no need to worry about it. In the domain of God when there is a provision for the maintenance of the body of even the vilest sinner or a confirmed atheist, will there not be any provision for maintaining the body of a Karmayogī? Therefore, it is futile to raise such a question.

Link:–In the ninth verse the Lord having declared that the world is not bound by actions which are performed for the sake of sacrifice, ordered Arjuna to perform action for that sake. The same order of the Lord was confirmed by Brahmā's word. Now in the next verse He explains the fruit of the performance and non-performance of sacrifice (duty).

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।
भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ।। १३ ।।

yajñaśiṣṭāśinaḥ santo mucyante sarvakilbiṣaiḥ
bhuñjate te tvagham pāpā ye pacantyātmakāraṇāt

The righteous who eat the remnants of the sacrifice are released from all sins; but those sinful ones who cook food for their own sake verily eat sin. 13

Comment:

'Yajñaśiṣṭāśinaḥ santaḥ'— When the duties are performed according to the scriptural injunctions without any hope of reward, equanimity (in the form of the remnant of the sacrifice) is achieved. The main factor in the Discipline of Action is that an action is peformed only with the material which is received from the world. Therefore; an action is called 'Yajña' only if by it service is rendered to the world. After performing the sacrifice (action) the remnant 'Yoga' (Equanimity) is for one self. This 'Yoga' (Equanimity) is the remnant which has been called 'nectar' in the fourth chapter (4/31).

'Mucyante sarvakilbiṣaiḥ'— Here the term 'Kilbiṣaiḥ' means sins viz; bondages. The Lord has used the adjective 'Sarva' (All) which means that having realized equanimity, a man is released from all bondages. All his actions performed in the past (as stored and fortune) as well as those performed at present melt away i.e., are reduced to nothing (Gītā 4/23)*. When his actions have been reduced to nothing, he attains to the eternal Absolute (Gītā 4/31).

In the ninth verse of this chapter the Lord

* When he has no desire, his stored actions of the past disappear. So long as the body is alive, desirable and undesireable circumstances appear according to the fortune, but he remains unaffected by them. Thus actions in the form of fortune also disappear. As far as the actions of the present are concerned, they are turned into inaction i.e., they don't bear any fruit because they are performed without any desire for fruit.

declared, "The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice" while in the twenty-third verse of the fourth chapter He declared, "All the actions of the man who works for the sake of sacrifice are dissolved". The same fact has been pointed out here in this verse. It means that people who realize equanimity, the remnant of sacrifice, are liberated from all bondages. Not only the sinful actions but also the virtuous actions which are performed with the hope of fruit are conducive to bondage. He who has attained equanimity as remnant of sacrifice, casts away both good (virtues) and evil (sins) (Gītā 2/50).

Now think over the root of bondage. The desire that this should happen and this should not happen, is the root of bondage. Desire is the cause of all sins (Gītā 3/37). So it must be renounced.

In fact, desire has no independent existence of its own. It is born of the feeling of utter want in the self, while in the self (soul) no paucity is ever possible. So the self has no desire. But a man (self) by identifying himself with the unreal body etc., feels the shortage of objects for the body as shortage in him and thus has a desire for the unreal. He should realize that he (self) ever remains the same, while the worldly objects and actions appear and disappear, they are born and they perish. So how can the perishable fulfil the desire of the imperishable? Therefore it is folly to hanker after those sense-objects. They can't make up the deficiency. If a serious and proper thought is given to this point, desires can be wiped out easily.

When a striver renders service with his body and things etc., without regarding them as his and for him, his affinity with the body and things etc., is renounced and he realizes the self. Then he feels no want. Such a man is liberated from the bondage of the world while he is alive.

'Ye pacantyātmakāraṇāt'— Any kind of desire, selfishness, attachment etc., are included in the expression 'Ātmakāraṇāt' (for their own sake). The more selfish a man is, the greater sinner he is.

Here the term 'Pacanti' denotes all the mundane actions such as eating, drinking, walking, sitting and so on. Whatever action a selfish man performs, either for himself or for others, performs only for himself. On the other hand the striver who, having renounced the selfish motive while performing his duty, works for others only even when he appears to work for himself. He who uses the objects which he has received from the world for his own enjoyment, actually cooks food for his own sake. It is a great sin to regard the body, a fragment of the world, as one's own and for one's own self. But he who without, regarding the body as his own, supplies necessities such as food, water and clothes etc., to it and does not allow it to be lazy, heedless and pleasure-seeking, renders service to it and becomes free from the feeling of mineness and attachment to it.

A man himself has to reap the fruit of the actions performed by him. But his actions affect the entire world. He who performs actions for himself deviates from his duty. That deviation results in calamities such as famines, epidemics and deaths etc., in the country. So it is proper on the part of a man that he should do nothing for himself, should regard nothing as his own and should desire nothing.

He who expects the perishable fruit of actions, is also included among those who cook food for their own sake. So the Lord in the first verse of the sixth chapter declares that a Karmayogī should perform his allotted duty without depending on the fruit of actions. When a man totally renounces dependence on the fruit of actions, he does nothing for himself and thus gets fixed in Yoga.

'Bhuñjate te tvagham pāpā'— The Lord condemns the sinful ones who perform actions for themselves. Such persons store so many sins which are not exhausted even after suffering tortures in hells and eighty-four lac forms of lives but their sinful actions remain as stored actions (samcita karma). Human life is such a marvellous field in

which as we sow so shall we reap for many births to come*. Therefore a man must resolve not to commit sins in future i.e., must not perform actions for himself. Such a resolution is a great power. The fact is that all the sins of the man who resolves to follow the spiritual path, cease to be committed by him.

Link:–Arjuna put the question to Lord Kṛṣṇa, "Why do You urge me to perform this savage deed?" In response to his question the Lord having given several reasons, propounds the necessity of performing sacrifice (duty) in order to maintain the world order, in the next two verses.

अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसंभवः ।
यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥ १४ ॥
कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।
तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ १५ ॥

annādbhavanti bhūtāni parjanyādannasaṁbhavaḥ
yajñādbhavati parjanyo yajñaḥ karmasamudbhavaḥ
karma brahmodbhavaṁ viddhi brahmākṣarasamudbhavam
tasmātsarvagataṁ brahma nityaṁ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam

From food creatures come into being; from rain food is produced; from sacrifice arises rain and sacrifice is born of action. Know thou that action has its origin in Brahma (the Veda) and Brahma springs from the Imperishable. Therefore, the all-pervading Infinite (God) ever rests in sacrifice. 14-15

Comment:

'Annādbhavanti bhūtāni'— 'Anna' stands for the articles of food which are eaten in order to nourish the body. Food is the cause of the birth, growth and nourishment of beings. Soil is the food for the insect which depends on it for its life. All beings such as men, birds, beasts, trees and plants etc., are born from food and are nourished with it.

'Parjanyādannasaṁbhavaḥ'— All the articles of food are produced from rain. Foliage and corn are produced from rain (water). Soil is also produced through water only. The necessities of the life such as food, clothes and shelter etc., somehow or the other have affinity with water and rain is the base of water.

'Yajñādbhavati parjanyaḥ'— Generally the term 'Yajña' stands for offering of oblation to the sacred fire. But here according to the gospel of the Gītā and in the context of Karmayoga it denotes performance of all duties such as oblation, charity and penance etc. In sacrifice importance is attached to renunciation or relinquishment. In oblation he has to offer (renounce) food and purified butter etc., in penance he has to renounce pleasure and in performing his duty he has to renounce his selfishness and comfort etc.

In Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad there is an anecdote. The creator Brahmā having created the gods, men and demons preached the letter 'D'. Men because of their mentality of hoarding, took it as 'Dāna' (Charity), the gods because of their luxuriant pleasures took it as 'Damana' (Self-Control)

* In fact this human birth is the first as well as the last birth of all births. If a man realizes God, it is the last birth. But if he does not attain God-Realization, it is the first one of the infinite births.

and demons because of their violent nature took it as 'Dayā' (Mercy). Thus the aim of his preaching is to inspire them to do good to others. The thundering of cloud which makes 'D D D' sound reminds us of Brahmā's preaching (charity, self-control and mercy) as our duty (Bṛhadāraṇyaka. 5/2/1-3).

How will it rain through the performance of duty?

Example is better than precept. 'Whatsoever a great man does, the same is done by others' (Gītā 3/21). If men perform their duty, the gods will also perform their duty by nourishing men through rain (Gītā 3/11). In this connection there is an anecdote. Four farmers in the rainy season considering it their duty started to plough their field even without rain. The peacocks saw them performing their duty. So to perform their duty they began to make a sound. Hearing their sound the clouds performed their duty by thundering. Having heard their thunder, Indra, the lord of the gods also thought of performing his duty through rainfall.

'Yajñaḥ karmasamudbhavaḥ'— All the actions performed disinterestedly as laid down in the scriptures, are included in the term 'Yajña'. To offer oblation to the sacred fire is 'Yajña' (Duty) of a celibate. For women performance of domestic duties such as cooking and serving her husband and other members is 'Yajña'. Prescription of medicines for the patient is 'Yajña' for a physician. Similarly study by the students and business by the businessmen without hoping any reward, done for the welfare of others can be regarded as 'Yajña' performed by them. Thus actions performed according to one's caste, order of life and circumstances in accordance with the ordinance of the scriptures without hoping any fruit, are called 'Yajña'. Whatever type of Yajña it may be, it is performed through actions only.

A physician having purified poison gives it to his patients. This purified poison like nectar cures deadly diseases. Similarly, when a striver performs actions by purifying them of the poison of desires, attachment, selfishness and pride etc., they like nectar cure him of the deadly disease of the cycle of birth and death. Such actions are called 'Yajña'.

'Karma brahmodbhavaṁ viddhi'— The methods of the performance of various kinds of sacrifices are known from the Vedas (Gītā 4/32). So it has been said that action has its origin in the Veda. Here the term 'Veda' stands for the four Vedas— Ṛig, Yajuṣ, Sāma and Atharva, jurisprudence, Purāṇa (18 very old historical records) and histories such as the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata etc., and also the scriptures.

'Brahmākṣarasamudbhavam'— Here the term 'Brahma' stands for the Veda. The Veda springs from the Imperishable God (Gītā 17/23). Thus God is the root of all.

The Veda springs from the Imperishable God. The Veda explains the methods of the performance of duty. Men perform the duty methodically. Sacrifice is performed by the performance of duty. Rain arises from sacrifice. Food is produced from rain. Creatures come into being from food. Out of those creatures men perform sacrifice by performing their duty*. Thus the wheel of creation is going on.

'Tasmātsarvagataṁ brahma nityaṁ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam'— Here the term 'Brahma' stands for the Imperishable God (Who is endowed with attributes and is formless). The all-pervading God specially rests in sacrifice (duty). It means that God remains present at the place where duty is performed without any hope for reward. Therefore the strivers who seek God-Realization can realize Him easily by performing their duty (Gītā 18/46).

Question:— How does the all-pervading God rest only in sacrifice? Does He not remain present at other places?

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* Yajña (Sacrifice) (actions for the welfare of others) is naturally performed by all moving and unmoving beings except human being. But it is only man who can apply his mind in its performance because he has got ability and right to do so.

Answer:— - God ever pervades equally everywhere. He is not limited and impermanent. Therefore He is called omnipresent. He is available in sacrifice this means that He is manifest in sacrifice. As water exists everywhere under the earth but it is available in the well and as the water of the pipe is available only through the tap on the hole, similarly all-pervading God specially rests in sacrifice.

Performance of actions for one's own self and assumption of affinity for the insentient body etc., are the obstacles to God-Realization. These obstacles are removed when duty is performed without hoping for any reward, for the welfare of others and then God, Who is ever attained, is naturally realized. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa is urging Arjuna to perform his duty by giving several reasons and pleas.

Link:–In order to maintain the world order it is man's responsibility to perform his duty. Therefore, the Lord in the next verse scolds the man who does not perform his duty.

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।
अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥ १६ ॥

evaṁ pravartitaṁ cakraṁ nānuvartayatīha yaḥ
aghāyurindriyārāmo moghaṁ pārtha sa jīvati

He who does not, in this world, follow the wheel thus set in motion, who is of sinful nature, sensual in his delight, lives in vain. 16

Comment:

[Here the Lord while concluding the topic started in the ninth verse addresses Arjuna as 'Pārtha' to remind him that he is the son of Pṛthā (Kuntī) who performed her duty by suffering troubles throughout her life. So he should also perform his duty. In fact the action which he was regarding as terrible was not terrible, it was sacrifice (duty). He who performs his duty follows the wheel of creation while he who does not perform his duty, does not follow this wheel].

'Evaṁ pravartitaṁ cakraṁ nānuvartayatīha yaḥ'—As a broken fragment of the wheel of a chariot gives a series of jerks to the charioteer as well as to the driver, similarly a man who does not follow the wheel of creation, creates an obstacle in the smooth running of the wheel of creation.

As the limbs and the body have close affinity, so do the man and the world have. When a man performs his duty by renouncing desire, feeling of 'mine', attachment and egoism etc., he gratifies the entire creation.

'Indriyārāmaḥ'— Sensual in his delight is he who enjoys the worldly objects through his senses by having desire and being attached to the sense-objects. Such a man is inferior even to beasts because beasts instead of performing sinful actions, are purified by receiving the fruit of their sins of the past. But such a man having committed new sins, has a downfall and by creating disturbance in the wheel of creation, gives pain to the entire creation.

'Aghāyuḥ'— The life of such a man is sinful because such a man who wants to enjoy the sensual pleasures, cannot escape sins. The person who hankers after selfishness, pride, pleasures and prosperity, causes sufferings to others and thus he is of sinful nature. Saint Tulasīdāsa in the Rāmacaritamānasa declares, "Those who are malicious engrossed in adultery, slanderous and hanker after the riches of others, are vile and sinful devils in human forms" (7/39).

'Moghaṁ pārtha sa jīvati'—The Lord condemns such a person who does not perform his duty by saying that such a person lives in vain i.e., it will be better

if he dies. If such a man dies, the people will not have to suffer without him. During the exile of Lord Rāma the wild tribes said that if they did not steal anyone's clothes and utensils, it meant that they were rendering service to Him (Mānasa 2/251/2). Similarly such persons who don't perform their duty should not at least disturb the wheel of creation. By doing so they would render service to creation.

Such a person who does not follow the wheel of creation has been said to be a thief (3/12), an eater of sin (3/13) and a sinful and sensual person who lives in vain in this verse.

Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsa also in the Rāmacaritamānasa declares about such a persons— His envy is like fire, anger is like that of the god of death, sins and evils are like the treasure of the god of wealth and he does evils to others like the comet. It is good if such a person like Kumbhakarṇa goes on sleeping for a long time (1/4/3).

Link:–The Lord has condemned the person who does not perform his duty in order to renounce his affinity with the world, in the preceeding verse. Now in the next two verses He talks about the enlightened soul who having performed his duty has renounced affinity for the world.

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।
आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥ १७ ॥

yastvātmaratireva syādātmatṛptaśca mānavaḥ
ātmanyeva ca saṁtuṣṭastasya kāryaṁ na vidyate

But for that man who rejoices only in the self, who is satisfied with the self and who is content in the self alone, verily there exists no work that needs to be done. 17

Comment:

'Yastvātmaratireva syādātmatṛptaśca mānavaḥ ātmanyeva ca saṁtuṣṭastasya'— Here the term 'Tu' (But) has been used to differentiate the person, who has become enlightened having performed his duty, from the person who does not perfom his duty as described in the preceding verse.

So long as a person assumes his affinity for the world, he rejoices in the sensual pleasures, wife, sons and family, remains satisfied with food stuff and is content in riches. But they can't provide him with perfect and continuous rejoicing, satisfaction and contentment because the world is kaleidoscopic, insentient and perishable while the self is uniform, sentient and imperishable. So how can the self be satisfied and contented by the world when there is not even the least affinity between the two?

A man can't take delight in the world constantly. The newly married couple take delight in each other but that delight or attraction does not continue to exist after the birth of one or two babies. Sometimes an old woman is heard saying about her husband, "It is good if the old man dies." The satisfaction provided by food and riches etc., is momentary and temporary.

In fact the worldly objects can't provide delight, satisfaction and contentment to man. If they had provided real delight, satisfaction and contentment, man would have never felt their absence. In the self delight, satisfaction and contentment naturally exist because the self is real and the real never ceases to be (Gītā 2/16). As the real always exists, there is no shortage in it and without shortage no desire is born. So there is no desire in the self. But when the self by an error assumes its affinity with the world, it seeks delight, satisfaction and contentment

in the world and has a desire for the worldly objects. When one desire is satisfied and the second is not born, at that time he remains free from any desire and that state of freedom provides him delight. But the man by error thinks that he has received delight, satisfaction and contentment by the satisfaction of desire. Had he got that delight by the satisfaction of that desire, that delight should have continued unabated and there should have not been any desire for that object again. But in fact it does not happen so. But when one desire is satisfied, another new desire is born and the process continues. When he has desire, it means he feels shortage and when he receives the desired object, he becomes a slave to it. Thus a man with a desire ever remains sad.

Here a point needs attention. A striver rightly thinks that lack of desire is the root of delight while desire is the root of sorrows. But the people attached to the world think otherwise. They think that they get delight having received objects or things and they are sad without them. If they realize the reality like the strivers, they can also get rid of desires.

The people, who perform actions with the hope of fruit, deserve to follow the Discipline of Action (Śrīmadbhāgavata 11/20/7). Such people derive delight, satisfaction and contentment out of the world. So the Lord, having described such persons who perform actions without the desire for their fruit declares that such strivers, unlike the worldly people, are delighted, contented and satisfied in the self (Gītā 2/55).

In fact delight, atisfaction and contentment are not different from each other, yet they seem to be different because of a person's affinity for the world. As soon as this affinity is renounced, the enlightened soul is delighted, satisfied and contented in the self, their difference which seemed to exist, disappears.

The Lord in this verse has used the terms 'Eva' (Only) and 'Ca' (And) twice while further in the eighteenth verse He has used these terms once. It reveals that a Karmayogī (One who follows the Discipline of Action) does not suffer shortage of delight, satisfaction and contentment and needs no greater bliss than this one (Gītā 6/22).

'Tasya kāryaṁ na vidyate'— The aim of the performance of actions for a man is to attain salvation or God-Realization. When this aim is achieved by anyone of the Disciplines of Actions, Knowledge or Devotion, nothing remains to be done, known and acquired by him and that is the supreme achievement of human life.

In the self there is no shortage. But so long as a man because of his affinity for the world, feels shortage in him (self) he performs actions for himself by regarding the body as 'I' and 'Mine'. In that case there remains some work which needs to be done by him. But when he instead of performing the actions for himself, performs them for others such as the body, senses, mind, intellect, life-breath, parents, wife, sons, family, society, country and the world, his affinity for the world is renounced. When his affinity for the world is completely renounced, nothing remains to be done by him because there is no activity in the self. Whatever action is performed, that is performed because of the affinity for the world by the worldly things. Therefore, work is to be done by those who have affinity for the world.

An action is performed when there is desire to acquire something and desire is born of want. The enlightened souls have no want so they have to do nothing.

When through the Discipline of Action the enlightened soul is delighted, satisfied and contented in the self, and nothing remains to be done, known and acquired by him, he transcends prescription and prohibition. Though such a God-Realized soul rises above the ordinance of the scriptures, yet his actions are in accordance with the scriptural injunctions and they are examples for others.

The expression 'Tasya kāryam na vidyate' does not mean that no action is performed by that God-Realized soul. But it means that though no work remains to be done

by him, actions are performed by him for the welfare of others. As the activities such as falling and rising of eyelids, breathing and digestion etc., go on automatically, similarly all the exemplary activities prescribed by the scriptures are automatically performed by the enlightened soul (because he has no sense of doership).

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।
न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥ १८ ॥

naiva tasya kṛtenārtho nākṛteneha kaścana
na cāsya sarvabhūteṣu kaścidarthavyapāśrayaḥ

For him there is no interest whatsoever in performance of an action or its non-performance nor does he depend on any creature for any interest of his. 18

Comment:

'Naiva tasya kṛtenārthaḥ'— Every one has a tendency to do some work or the other for himself. So long as a man has the tendency to acquire the worldly things, some work remains to be done by him. He is bound by the desire of acquiring something or the other. Performance of duty is inevitable in order to get rid of that desire.

Actions are performed in two ways – in order to satisfy the desire and in order to get rid of the desire. Common men work in order to satisfy their desires while a Karmayogī performs actions in order to get rid of desires. Therefore an enlightened soul being free from desire, has not the least affinity for the performance of duty. Actions are performed by him automatically without any selfish motive for the welfare of the entire creation.

Such a God-Realized soul realizes that all the worlly objects, body, senses, mind and intellect etc., are not his own but they belong to the world.

So they should be utilized for the world. This is because no action can be performed without the help of the world. Apart from this, material required for action is also an offshoot of the world. It is in no way related to one's own self. Therefore nothing is ours. The cosmos can never be meant for the individual. Here lies fault with the man that he tries to utilise the cosmic entity for his individual purposes. This generates unrest. If he utilises his body, senses, mind, intellect and matter etc., for the universal use, he can get a state of quietitude. This characteristic is there in an accomplished Karmayogī that all his so-called body, senses, mind, intellect and matter etc., are utilised for the service of the entire world. Thus he is totally unconcerned towards his bodily activities. Even then a great person instinctively performs excellent deeds, ideal for the generality of men. Thus by utilizing them for the world, he attains great peace and his actions are exemplary.

'Nākṛteneha kaścana'— He who assumes his affinity for the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., and remains inclined towards indolence and sloth, does not want to perform actions because he wants to enjoy the happiness which arises from sleep, indolence and sloth and which is declared to be of the nature of ignorance (Gītā 18/39). But how can the great soul, who transcends even the Sāttvika happiness, be inclined towards the pleasure arising out of ignorance? When he has not even the least affinity for body etc., how can he be inclined towards indolence and heedlessness etc.?

A Vital Fact

Generally the strivers attach importance to actionlessness. They want to pose them

in trance being completely unattached with the actions so that no thoughts are left active. This is an excellent and useful thing no doubt, but it is not a principle (final truth). Though inaction is superior to action yet it is not the essence.

Inclination and abstention both are within the realm of the nature. Up to the 'Nirvikalpa' trance every stage is within the reign of Prakṛti because deviation is possible even at this stage. Every action takes place in Prakṛti. Even fall involves action and without action fall (Vyutthāna) is impossible. Therefore like walking, speaking, laughing and hearing etc., sleeping, sitting, standing keeping quiet, fainting and going into trance also are actions. The real essence (conscious self) is free from inclination and abstention both. The self is an untainted illuminator of action and inaction both. When a person identifies the self with the body, actions are divided into two classes– performance and non-performance. But in fact both of them belong to the same class. Till attachment to the body persists, non-performance of an action is an action. As 'Go' is a verb so 'Stand' is also a verb and both involve activity though in the former the activity is clearly seen while in the latter it is not clearly seen.

The question of performance or non-performance of actions arises only when a man has affinity with the body. Unless such affinity is there, no action is possible.

The enlightened soul who renounces his total affinity for nature and its evolutes (the insentient Matter), realizes the self which transcends both activity and non-activity. Therefore, a striver should renounce his affinity for Matter (egoism and attachment to the body). The self (Tattva) ever remains the same as it is.

'Na cāsya sarvabhūteṣu kaścid-arthavyapāśrayaḥ'— When a great soul has not the least affinity of selfishness for the body and the world, all his actions are automatically performed for the welfare of others. As limbs of the body are ever engaged in doing good to the body, the body (a fragment of the world) of that enlightened soul ever remains engaged in doing good to the world. Moreover, he has not the least pride or desire for fruit or selfish motive like the hand when it washes the face.

In the preceding verse the Lord declared that there exists no work that needs to be done by a God-Realized soul. In order to explain its reason, the Lord mentions three factors– (1) He has no interest in what is done. (2) He has no interest in what is not done. (3) He does not depend on any thing or creature for any interest of his.

In fact the self has no interest in what is done or what is not done and has no affinity with either any being or thing because no action is performed by the self. All the actions are performed only when the self assumes its affinity for nature and the things born of nature. Therefore, no action is to be performed for the self.

So long as a man has a desire to do, to acquire and to live and he is afraid of death, he has got the responsibility to perform actions. But when he renounces this desire and is not afraid of death, he has not to perform action but action (duty) is automatically performed by him. One who is susceptible to deviation from duty needs advice.

An Important Fact

In the Gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the marks of the God-Realized souls according to the Discipline which they follow as strivers. The same sort of description has been given here in the seventeenth and the eighteenth verses.

The topic of the Discipline of Action begins from the thirty-ninth verse of the second chapter but the gist has been explained in the forty-seventh verse of the second chapter when the Lord declares it in four stages:-

(1) Thy right is to work only.
(2) Have no desire for its fruit.
(3) Let not the fruit of action be thy motive (object).

(4) Neither let thy attachment be towards inaction.

In this verse (3/18) here is the description of the God-Realized soul who has attained perfection through Karmayoga as described in the previous verse. Whatever has been said there (in 2/47) in the second and the third points for the striver, here the same has been said in the second half of this verse for the God-Realized soul that he has no affinity for any creature or thing; similarly, whatever has been said there in the first and the fourth points for the striver, here the same has been said in the first half of this verse for the God-Realized soul that he has no interest in what is done or what is not done. Thus here in the verses seventeenth and eighteenth the description of the marks of a God-Realized soul, who has realized Him through the Discipline of Action, has been given.

According to the Discipline of Action the eighteenth verse should have preceded the seventeenth verse because when a God-Realized soul has no interest in what is done or what is not done and when he does not depend on any creature for any interest of his, he gets delight, satisfaction and contentment in his own self. But in the sixteenth verse the Lord declared, "He who does not perform his duty, lives in vain." Therefore, in the seventeenth verse by using the expression 'Yaḥ tu' (Who but) the Lord explains that if the God-Realized soul does not perform the duty, he does not live in vain but his life is very useful because he has attained the aim of human life. Therefore, nothing remains to be done by him.

The state in which nothing remains to be done can be attained even by a common man by performing his duty efficiently without expecting any reward, because every one deserves to attain Him. The practice of Karmayoga can be performed in all circumstances. Desire for sensual pleasure is the main obstacle to the performance of one's duty. So if a striver wipes out this desire for pleasure by serving others, without having any selfish motive, he can attain supreme peace by getting rid of all pains, and sorrows of life. As far as the supreme peace is concerned, every one is equally deserving in attaining it, while it is not possible for every one to have worldly possessions in equal share.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse explains what a striver should do in order to attain the state of a God-Realized soul described in the preceding verse.

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।
असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥ १९ ॥

tasmādasaktaḥ satatam kāryam karma samācara
asakto hyācarankarma paramāpnoti pūruṣaḥ

Therefore, even without attachment, perform duty bound action efficiently that has to be done; for by performing action without attachment man attains the Supreme. 19

Comment:

'Tasmādasaktaḥ satatam kāryam karma samācara' — The term 'Tasmāt' (Therefore) has been used to connect the preceding verse with this verse. In the preceding verse the Lord declared that actions are performed by a God-Realized soul for the welfare of others though there is no need for him to perform them. Therefore, the Lord uses the term 'Tasmāt' to order Arjuna to realize God by performing his duty without hoping for reward. The reason is that the self has no interest in what is done or what is not done. Actions are ever performed for others, not for the self. When a striver performs actions

for others, his attachment to the performance of actions disappears and he gets fixed in the self. He is attached to them when he thinks "I am body", "The body is mine" and regards the perishable objects such as body etc., as significant.

It is attachment, not action which leads to downfall. Being attached to the body, senses, mind, intellect and other mundane objects etc., a man performs actions in order to derive pleasure out of them. This attachment to the materialistic objects etc., leads him to the cycle of birth and death. The Lord declares, "Attachment to the modes born of nature is the cause of the birth of soul in good and evil wombs" (Gītā 13/21). When a striver performs actions without attachment, his affinity for the insentient (Matter) is renounced.

All the actions of a striver who performs them being free from attachment, are automatically for the welfare of all creatures, while the person who is attached to mundane objects and actions etc., can't do good to others.

So far we have used the mundane materials such as body etc., for our own pleasures and prosperity. Therefore, we are indebted to the world. We can get out of debt by performing duty for the welfare of the world. When we perform action for ourselves, instead of being out of debt, we run into debt more and more. Therefore, we have to take birth in the world again and again in order to get out of debt. By performing actions for the welfare of others we get out of the old debt and we cease to run into new debt as we perform actions in a disinterested way. Thus, we are liberated from bondage.

An action can't be performed constantly but attachment remains constant. So the Lord by the expression "Satatam asaktaḥ" urges Arjuna to be constantly free from attachment. A striver should perform his duty prescribed by the scriptures constantly without attachment. In fact attachment also does not remain constant. Even when the world itself is not constant, it is kaleidoscopic, how can its attachment remain constant? In spite of that, in the assumed ego, attachment seems to be there constantly.

'Kāryam' viz., duty is that which can be done and must be done. In other words, duty is the action which must be performed for the welfare of others according to the ordinance of the scriptures and according to one's capacity, by renouncing one's selfish motive. In this way, duty is linked with the welfare of others.

Every one has the freedom and capability to perform one's duty. It can be performed very easily. But it is because of heedlessness, indolence and desire for fruit that its performance seems difficult. A man can perform his duty independently under all circumstances. Attachment perishes through the performance of duty, while it enhances through the non-performance of duty. By performing duty for the welfare of others we get rid of our present attachment and by ridding ourselves of all desires we get rid of future attachment.

The term 'Samācara' means that the duty must be performed very carefully, enthusiastically, promptly and duly so that the aim may be attained. If there is the least dereliction of duty, it amounts to a great hurdle in the path of a Karmayogī. A man's duty according to his caste, order of life, nature and circumstances prescribed by the scriptures is 'Sahaja Karma' (Innate Duty). One should not give up one's innate duty even though it may be defective (Gītā 18/48), because by doing so one does not incur sin (Gītā 18/47). So here the Lord seems to urge Arjuna to perform his innate duty of waging the war because he is a Kṣatriya (a member of the warrior class) even though the act may seem terrible to him. An innate duty must be performed without attachment as it leads to equanimity.

Something Note-Worthy

When a being is born as a human being, he is provided with all the materials such as body, riches, property etc., and he has to leave behind all the materials here when he departs. It proves that he has been

given this material in the same way, as a clerk is provided with the material in the office so that he may work with it. But it does not mean that it is his. As a clerk is paid for doing the office work, similarly the striver who performs actions for the world, his affinity for the world is renounced and he realizes his identity (unity) with God. This unity with God is his reward.

This world is the field for practising spiritual discipline. Whatever material has been provided to us here, is only for practising spiritual practices rather than for pleasures and prosperity. It is neither ours nor for us. If and when we gain our own thing, viz., the Supreme Bliss (God-Realization), (Self-Realization) nothing remains to be gained after it, i.e., there remains no desire for anything else (Gītā 6/22). But we may acquire innumerable worldly things, the desire to acquire more is never satisfied, it rather enhances.

When a person accepts a thing as his own and for him by error, he is bound. The Discipline of Action is an easy and good method to wipe out this error. A Karmayogī who without assuming a thing as his own and for him, uses it in order to render service to others, is easily liberated from the worldly bondage because he performs actions for the world by renouncing attachment, feeling of 'mine' and desire etc. Thus the flow of his actions is towards the world and he is liberated. On the other hand a common person who performs actions with attachment, feeling of 'mine' and desire etc., the flow of actions is towards him and so he is bound.

'Asakto hyācarankarma'— A striver should perform actions for the welfare of the world without attachment, having no desire for their fruit. His affinity for the things and persons of the world is renounced by rendering service to them, and with the things and persons of the future by having no desire.

In a fair volunteers render service to the public without expecting any reward. So they sleep soundly without remembering any person of the public. Similarly the striver who serves others without expecting honour and praise etc., does not remember them and is thus easily liberated from the worldly bondage.

In the Discipline of Action, actions are performed for the welfare of others without any attachment. Attachment can be wiped out only when actions are performed according to the scriptural injunctions (Mānasa 3/16/1). Attachment can never be wiped out by performing forbidden actions.

'Paramāpnoti pūruṣaḥ'— As in the thirty-fourth verse of the thirteenth chapter the Lord has mentioned attainment to the Supreme by the term 'Param' (The Supreme) for a Sāṅkhyayogī (follower of the Discipline of Knowledge), similarly, here it has been mentioned by the same term for a Karmayogī (follower of the Discipline of Action). It means that a striver according to his taste, inclination and faith attains God-Realization by anyone of the Disciplines of Action, Knowledge or Devotion (Gītā 5/4-5). God is He Who pervades everywhere, every time, Who is everyone's and is attainable to everyone undoubtedly and automatically.

Question:—How can the pride of doership which is an obstacle to God-Realization, be wiped out?

Answer:—Common people perform actions for themselves thinking that they are the doers. But a Karmayogī thinks that whatever he has acquired from the world is not his, but it is of the world. Therefore, with the body, senses, mind, intellect, money and material etc., which he has acquired from the world, he renders service to the world. Thus his pride of doership perishes.

A Karmayogī does not perform actions in order to enjoy their fruits. He regards the body as a fragment of the world. Therefore, there is nothing to be proud of, if the body renders service to the world, in the same way, as a hand is not proud of rendering a great service to the face by washing it.

A man performs actions in order to achieve a goal. As soon as the action is over,

he gets engrossed in that goal. As a businessman starts business in order to earn money, but as soon as his transaction is over, he starts counting the money without thinking of customers etc., who came to buy articles from his shop. A worldly man having the mundane aim remains engrossed in the world but he can't be identified with the world in spite of doing so because the world is kaleidoscopic and insentient while the self is uniform and sentient. But the striver who performs actions having the aim of God-Realization, gets identified with God (whether he realizes this fact or not) because both of them are uniform and sentient. In this state of identification no question can arise regarding the pride of doership.

Actions have a beginning and an end. So the person who performs an action also ceases to be a doer as soon as the action ends. But being under an illusion, he regards himself as a doer even when he does not perform any action. Thus by considering himself a doer constantly, his pride of doership instead of perishing, enhances. An orator considers himself an orator even when he does not make a speech. He regards himself superior to the audience and wants the people to honour and serve him and also fulfil his necessities. But if he regards himself as an orator only during the period of speech and not afterwards,he will expect no reward from the audience and thus his doership will merge in the aim.

As an eater regards himself as an eater only when he eats food, a Karmayogī also regards himself as a doer only when he performs actions not at other times. Suppose a Karmayogī delivers discourses and he has won high fame. In spite of that if an occasion arises to hear a discourse, he can easily listen to it without expecting any honour, respect and status because now he considers himself a listenery, not a speaker, any superiority complex, he becomes a hearer or a sweeper according to the need of the moment. Thus his pride of doership does not remain constantly. A thing which changes actually does not exist. So how can relationship with it remain constant ? By thinking so, a striver realizes his egolessness.

An actor in the drama plays the role of Hariścandra. But while playing that role, he does not regard himself as real Hariścandra. Similarly, a Karmayogī, while performing all actions according to the scriptural injunctions, does not regard himself as a doer. He like an actor serves the world with the worldly things without regarding them as his or for himself. Thus he has no pride of doership in the least.

Similarly he accepts his affinity for his kith and kin while serving them only in order to serve them. He performs his duty to the best of his capacity and resources, to his wife, children and other members even though they are ugly, hard-hearted and quarrelsome. Moreover, he thinks that his wife or children are not only his but also of others. For example his wife is her childern's mother, her father's daughter, her brother's sister and so on. Thus, they have also a claim on her. Similar is the case with other relatives such as father, sons and brothers etc. So a striver performs his duty efficiently like an actor without thinking of the duty of others. By having the pride of doership a man thinks of the duty of others and by thinking so, he deviates from his duty, while a Karmayogī does not accept his constant affinity for his caste, order of life, sect and circumstances etc., and so performs his duty efficiently. A thing which is not constantly in existence, is for that matter not in existence at all. Thus the sense of doership of a Karmayogī automatically perishes.

A Vital Fact

A man has his identity for God Who has no sense of doership. As a swing while moving, stops still for a fraction of a second, in the same way there is always the state of actionlessness (equanimity) after an action ends and the second one begins. Secondly if we perceive in the right perspective, we come to know that as the rope of the swing when it moves, remains straight, the

man also remains in the state of equanimity even while working. If he wants to realize this fact, he can realize it as soon as an action is over. In case a striver is constantly careful in this respect, he can realize equanimity or his identity with God where there is no sense of doership.

In order to wipe out the pride of doership a striver should distinguish the real which really exists from the unreal (Illusion) which seems to exist. The world which is kaleidoscopic is illusion while the all-pervading Lord is real and He is automatically attained to every one—from Brahmā, the creator to even an ant.

The world which seems to exist is turning into naught. The senses, mind and intellect etc., with which the world is seen, are nothing but illusion. The all-pervading Lord Who ever exists is always attained to us. Therefore, in the Gītā it has been declared, "The unreal has no existence and the real never ceases to be" (2/16).

All the worldly objects and actions are nothing but illusion. Actionlessness exists at the beginning and the end of every action. And this is a rule that whatever is at the beginning and the end also remains in the middle. Therefore, actionlessness automatically exists even when an action is going on. That actionlessessence viz., the sentient or God is the illuminator of both actions and actionlessness and He transcends the two.

It is because of our attachment (affinity) to the illusion (objects, actions and persons etc.) that we can't realize God. As soon as attachment is renounced, ever attained God is realized. Therefore, when being free from attachment, we apply this illusion (body and objects etc.) in the service of the illusion (world), the flow of this illusion (body and objects etc.) is towards the illusion (world), and God Who is ever attained, remains.

Link:–Has there been any person who attained perfection (God-Realization) through the performance of action without attachment? The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।
लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥ २० ॥

karmaṇaiva hi saṁsiddhimāsthitā janakādayaḥ
lokasaṁgrahamevāpi saṁpaśyankartumarhasi

It was by action alone that Janaka and others attained perfection. Thou shouldst perform selfless action also with a view to the maintenance of the world. 20

Comment:

'Karmaṇaiva hi saṁsiddhimāsthitā janakādayaḥ' —The term 'Ādi' stands for 'beginning' as well as 'like'. Here the former meaning does not suit because before Janaka there had been great souls like Vivasvān, Vaivasvata Manu and king Ikṣvāku who had attained to perfection through the performance of action (Gītā 4/1-2). Therefore, here it is used in the latter sense which means that some great souls like Janaka, before and after him, attained salvation, leading householder's life by action.

This Discipline of Action is very old. By this discipline Janaka and several other great souls have attained salvation or God-Realization. Therefore, if anyone at present or in future wants to realize God through the path of action, he without regarding the body and the objects as his own, should apply them for the service of the world by considering them the world's. In fact they belong to the world. By doing so his affinity with the world is easily renounced and God is attained. Therefore, the Discipline of Action is an easy, good and independent means to realize God.

Here the expression 'Karmaṇā eva' stands

for the expression 'Asakto hyācarankarma' i.e., performance of action without attachment. By performing the actions thus, a man is liberated from bondage of actions, otherwise he is bound (Mahā., Śānti. 241/7).

It is characteristic of the style of the Gītā that the Lord briefly repeats the main idea of the preceding verse in the next one also which is of great help to the striver. Performance of action without attachment explained in the preceding verse is explained in brief in this verse by the expression 'Karmaṇā eva'. Similarly, He will explain the main point described in the sixth verse of the twelfth chapter again in the seventh verse in brief in the expression, "Whose mind is set on Me".

Here the Lord instead of the expression 'Karmaṇā eva' could have used the expression 'Yogena eva'. But here the topic is of the performance of action without attachment. Therefore, the Lord has used this expression which suits the context.

In fact, the sentient Lord can't be realized through insentient actions alone. The stumbling block to God-Realization is removed through the performance of action without attachment. Then the all-pervading God is realized.

A Vital Fact Pertaining to God-Realization

Generally people think that they can attain God by performing action or by making efforts. They hold that as they have to make a lot of effort in order to meet a high officer, they will have to make much more effort (in the form of penance, fast etc.) in order to attain God, Who is the Lord of infinite universes. But it is an error on their part.

Human life has a great affinity for actions. So in the Gītā it is mentioned, "Meeting death when passion prevails, the embodied soul is born among those attached to action" (14/15). Therefore, a man has an inclination for actions and he wants to attain his aim through actions. He holds that as the worldly things can be acquired through actions, God can also be attained by actions. So he tries to attain Him through actions. But the fact is that the Imperishable Lord can't be attained by actions. Only the perishable worldly things can be acquired through actions because all the actions are performed with the help of the perishable (body, senses and mind etc.) while God is realized by total renunciation of affinity for the perishable.

Every action has a beginning and an end, so its fruit is also perishable. The thing which is at some distance (unacquired) with the point of view of space or time can be acquired by actions. Thus only the worldly things which are perishable, kaleidoscopic and confined, can be acquired through actions. But the Lord Who pervades everywhere and Who is uniform and imperishable, can't be attained through actions. He is automatically attained. The worldly things can't be acquired by thinking, but the Lord can be attained by thinking because He is the nearest. The fact is that the Lord is not attained by thinking. But when a striver thinks of the Lord, he stops thinking of the world. As soon as this thinking about the world is renounced, the ever attained Lord is realized.

Not only the all-pervading God is never away from us but His distance from us is an impossibility also. He is much nearer from even the supposedly close 'I'ness. 'I'ness is limited spatially and temporally but God knows no limitation. In order to experience such a close and ever available God, it is decieving one's own Self to apply logic and arguments as if it were a worldly object.

The worldly things can't be acquired by having a keen desire, while God can be realized only by having a keen desire. The human life is meant to have a keen desire for God-Realization not for sense enjoyments. This desire is not aroused because man has a desire for worldly pleasures and prosperity. If the desire for pleasures and prosperity is renounced, the keen desire for God-Realization may be aroused instantly and God may also be realized immediately.

Here it is necessary to clearly understand the difference between the 'aim' and the desire for fruit. God-Realization is the aim of human life while desire to acquire the perishable things is the desire for fruit of action. An aim is achieved while the desire for fruit is wiped out. Self-Realization or God-Realization is the aim, rather than the fruit. An action which is performed in order to attain an aim can't be called an action with 'desire for fruit'. Therefore, a Karmayogī performs all actions with an aim rather than with a desire for fruit.

In Karmayoga (Discipline of Action) prescribed actions are performed with the aim of renouncing affinity for actions (Matter). Such a striver performs actions for the welfare of others by renouncing the desire for fruit while a common man performs actions for himself with the desire for fruit. In the case of the latter the action is turned into fruit and so the fruit has its affinity for the action; while the aim has no affinity for the action. When a striver performs action for the welfare of others without expecting any reward, his misconception that the Lord is far away from him, is removed.

'Lokasaṁgrahamevāpi saṁpaśyankartumarhasi'— The word 'Loka' has three meanings – (1) Human world (2) Creatures of the world (3) All the scriptures (except the Vedas). Performance of actions (of daily routine) for the human world and its creatures according to the ordinance of the scriptures is 'Lokasamgraha' (Maintenance of the world).

'Lokasaṁgraha' means to persuade the people to turn to the real by dissuading them from the unreal. If a great soul through his word and action persuades the people to turn towards the real from the unreal, it leads them to salvation.

If he performs his duty merely as a show, it is not 'Loksamgraha'. He should perform his duty sincerely according to his caste, order of life and sect etc.

No action is either superior or inferior. Whatever action is performed according to one's caste, order of life, sect, time and circumstances, is regarded as superior. Actions are regarded as superior and inferior according to their form and fruit*. When the desire for fruit is renounced, all actions lead to perfection or God-Realization. As far as renunciation of affinity for the insentient (Matter) is concerned, all actions– superior or inferior are of equal importance.

No one can live without the help of others. Body is acquired from parents; knowledge and education is received from preceptors. The food stuff, the clothes, the house and other necessities of life are prepared by others. Thus every one has to depend on others for his necessities. There- fore, every person is indebted to others. In order to get out of this debt he has to perform his duty for the welfare of others without any selfish motive. When he does not regard the body and other worldly objects in the least as his own or for him, he gets out of the debt.

Link:–How action leads to the maintenance of the world, is discussed in the next verse.

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥ २१ ॥

yadyadācarati śreṣṭhastattadevetaro janaḥ
sa yatpramāṇaṁ kurute lokastadanuvartate

Whatsoever a great man does, the same is done by others as well. Whatever standard he sets, the world follows the same. 21

* Oratory is regarded as superior to sweeping. Less charity seems to bear less fruit while more charity seems to bear more fruit.

Comment:

'Yadyadācarati śreṣthastattadevetaro janaḥ'— A great man is he who knows the reality about the world (body etc.) and the self. He realizes that the body, senses, mind, intellect, riches, property and family etc., are not his, but they belong to the world. Not only this, but he does not regard renunciation, dispassion, devotion, knowledge and other virtues also as his own because by doing so, his egoism is nourished which is an obstacle to Self-Realization. The feelings "I am a renouncer", "I am dispassionate", "I am a devotee" and "I am a knower" nourish his egoism and thus they are the stumbling blocks to Self-Realization. Not to speak of the personal egoism, the group egoism remains only for dealings and is engaged in redering service to the world as it belongs to the world (Gītā 7/4; 13/5).

The body, riches, family, position ability and authority etc., which have been provided to us by the world are neither meant for our pleasure nor for our possession, but they are for the service of others. He who enjoys them himself is verily a thief (Gītā 3/12). All of them belong to the world and so great men utilize them in rendering service to the world. They have a natural inclination for the welfare of all beings.

The feeling of selflessness causes unity and love, while the feeling of selfishness causes strife. The former leads to salvation while the latter to degradation. By regarding the body as 'I' 'Mine' and 'For me' the feeling of selfishness is caused. The great men who don't accept the feeling of affinity for the body, have no selfish motive. So all their actions are for the welfare of others. Sight, touch, talk and thinking of such great men automatically lead to the welfare of people. Even the air which touches them does good to the people.

Such type of great men are of two kinds– (1) 'Avadhūta' – The hermit kind who lead a holy and lonely life such hermits are ideal only for hermits, not for common folk. (2) 'Ācārya' – Model for others – who set example for others. Their actions are according to the scriptural injunctions. They have neither egoism nor the sense of 'mine'. Their actions are automatically performed for the welfare of the world. They leave their sweet smell by destroying the bad smell just like a blooming flower. Such great men have their identity with the Lord because both of them work for the welfare of the entire world.

Different limbs of the the body constitute whole of the body and ever remain prepared to help one another when anyone is injured, and they consider its recovery the recovery of the entire body. Similarly, all the beings of the world, in spite of being different, are one and the same and the performance of the duty by one is for the welfare of the entire world.

As far as the actions and words of the great men are concerned, they leave a gross impression which is limited because the actions are limited. But as far as their feelings are concerned, their influence is subtle and limitless because feelings are limitless. They set examples for other people by performing their duty according to their caste, social order, sect etc., and make a strong impression on others.

Though a great man does not perform any actions for himself as he has no pride of doership yet people feel that he performs actions. So the term 'Ācarati' (Does) has been used. Actions are automatically performed by him for the welfare of others without any selfish motive. Though he has nothing to do (Gītā 3/17), and has no egoism (Gītā 2/71), yet duty is naturally and efficiently performed by him which is automatically for the welfare of the entire world.

An Important Fact

It is generally observed that whatever actions are performed and whatever standards are set by the great men, are followed by common people.

Common people who attach importance to wealth and position follow the examples set by the millionaires and leaders regarding

them as great, though they are not really great. These rich people and leaders resort to evil practices such as false-hood, forgery, dishonesty, thefts and corruption to gain riches, fame and status in the society. The common people who consider them great follow those evil practices. Thus those evils become rampant in the society without any schooling.

How shocking and surprising it is that at present a millionaire is regarded as great, but a devotee who chants the name of the Lord a hundred thousand times a day, is not considered great. They don't think that when the millionaire dies, he will not take a single penny with him, while the whole wealth of the chanting of the Lord's name will ultimately go with the devotee.

The great and noble men such as teachers, preachers, priests, leaders and rulers etc., who hold positions of honour in the society, should perform their duties very carefully so that they may leave a good impression upon other people who may follow the standard set by noble men. They are just like the drivers who may carry the passengers to their destinations or may cause accidents.

'Sa yatpramāṇam kurute lokastadanuvartate'— The great man is free from such evils as desire, feeling of mine, attachment, selfishness and favouritism and does not attach importance to the perishable objects. His word automatically influences the people and they start following his preaching.

Here a doubt may arise why the Lord has used, 'He sets a standard' and also 'Whatever a great man does' when either of them might have been sufficient. The clarification is that though the deed is important yet a great man can't perform the deed of the people of different castes, orders of life etc. He sets a standard by his word, quoting the scriptures and historical characters so that the people of other castes, orders of life and creed etc., by performing their duty sincerely and promptly may attain perfection (Gītā 18/45). By following his advice they start to perform their duty according to their castes, creeds and orders of life etc.

Though the scope of deeds is limited while that of standard (word) is wide, yet the Lord has used five terms 'Yat', 'Yat', 'Tat', 'Tat' and (specially) 'Eva' for the deeds of a great man while He has used only two terms 'Yat' and 'Tat' for the standard (word) set by him. It means that the deeds of a great man have five times the effect while standard (word) has twice the effect. Therefore, the Lord in the twentieth verse of this chapter has laid special emphasis on the performance of duty for the welfare of the world.

If a great man instead of performing his duty according to his caste, creed and stage of life etc., preaches the gospel (standard) only, it will not influence the people because they will think that these are merely precepts which need not be translated into practice because the great man himself is only preaching, not practising. Therefore, a great man has to do good to the people by performing his duty as well as by setting standard i.e., through word.

Only those people who have faith in a great man follow his deeds and standard (word). But if a person does not regard a great man as really great, he will not follow the deeds and standard (word) set by him.

In modern times people have not much inclination to spiritualism in spite of a lot of preachings. The reason is that the preachers themselves don't practise what they preach. So their shot is just like firing in the air. But on the other hand there are preachers who believe in the maxim "Example is better than precept". Their shot hits the target and inspires the men to practise spiritual discipline. The spiritual discourses leave a little impression on almost every one but those who are devotees and have reverence, are immensely benefited.

Link:–Now the Lord in the next three verses lays emphasis on the performance of duty by citing His own example.

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किंचन ।
नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥ २२ ॥

na me pārthāsti kartavyaṁ triṣu lokeṣu kiṁcana
nānavāptamavāptavyaṁ varta eva ca karmaṇi

There is nothing in the three worlds, O Arjuna, that should be done by Me, nor is there anything unattained that should be attained; yet I engage Myself in action. 22

Comment:

'Na me pārthāsti kartavyaṁ triṣu lokeṣu kiṁcana nānavāptamavāptavyam'— The Lord is not confined to one world. So He is saying here that there is nothing in the three worlds that should be done by Him. All men, beasts and birds etc., perform actions in order to attain something or the other. But the Lord is mentioning here an uncommon fact that He also performs action though there is nothing which should be done or attained by Him.

Though God has nothing to do for Himself, yet He incarnates for the welfare of others and performs action for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness (Gītā 4/8). The Lord creates the universe also for the salvation of creatures. He has created heaven so that beings may reap the fruit of their virtuous actions. Eighty-four lac forms of lives and hells have been created so that beings may reap the fruit of their evil actions while the human life has been created so that a human being, having transcended virtues and vices, may attain salvation viz., God-Realization. This is possible only when he does nothing for himself. All his activities–actions with the gross body, thinking with the subtle body and trance with the causal body, should be applied for the welfare of the world. The reason is that this threefold body is not of one's own but it belongs to the world. Therefore, a Karmayogī considers the body, senses, mind, intellect and all the materials etc., of the world (which in fact belong to the world) and utilizes them in rendering service to the world. If he consumes them in order to enjoy pleasures, he commits a blunder. When a person accepts the worldly things as his, he wants to reap the fruit and in order to reap the fruit he has to perform action. Thus so long as a man performs action in order to attain something, duty remains to be performed by him.

If we give a serious thought to the subject, we come to know that a man has to do nothing for himself because God Who is to be attained is ever-attained and the self is eternal while the actions and their fruits are perishable. So how can the perishable (actions and their fruits) have their affinity for the imperishable (self)? Actions have their affinity for the body and the world rather than the self. Therefore, there is nothing to be done for the self. When there is nothing to be done for the self, how can there be anything to be done for God?

While talking about the enlightened soul who has attained perfection through the Discipline of Action, the Lord in the seventeenth and eighteenth verses of this chapter declared, "There exists no action to be done by such an enlightened soul who is delighted, satisfied and contented in the self. Such a soul has nothing to do with the performance or non-performance of actions and he has not the least affinity for selfishness with any being. Yet he performs actions for the welfare of the world." Similarly here also the Lord declares for Himself that there is nothing that should be done by Him, yet He is engaged in action for the welfare of the world. It means that an enlightened soul becomes identical with the Lord (Gītā 14/2) and as the Lord is a model in the three worlds (Gītā 3/23;

4/11), similarly an enlightened soul is a model in this world (Gītā 3/25).

'Varta eva ca karmaṇi'— Here the Lord by the term 'Eva' (Only) means to say that He performs actions enthusiastically, promptly, carefully and thoroughly.

As compartments of a train attached to an engine follow the engine, similarly the Lord and saints (who have nothing to do and nothing to attain) perform their duty and other people follow them. These people have a desire to act and to attain something or the other. They get rid of this desire by performing their duty without expecting any reward. If the Lord and saints did not perform their duty, the people would also follow their path, they would become indolent and heedless and would perform forbidden actions. So they would not get rid of desires. Therefore, duty is automatically performed by the Lord and saints for the welfare of the whole humanity.

As the Lord ever performs his duty, He never abandons it, similarly a striver should always perform his duty so that he may attain God easily. If he does not perform his duty, he remains deprived of God-Realization.

यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ २३ ॥
उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम् ।
संकरस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥ २४ ॥

yadi hyahaṁ na varteyaṁ jātu karmaṇyatandritaḥ
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ
utsīdeyurime lokā na kuryāṁ karma cedaham
saṁkarasya ca kartā syāmupahanyāmimāḥ prajāḥ

For, if I did not engage Myself in action unwearied, men would in everyway follow My path, O Arjuna. If I did not perform action, these worlds would perish and I should be the creator of confusion of castes and destruction of these people. 23-24

Comment:

[In the twenty-second verse the Lord by the positive inference laid emphasis on the performance of duty. In this verse He by the negative inference mentions the harm that would be done if He did not perform duty].

'Yadi hyahaṁ na varteyaṁ jātu karmaṇyatandritaḥ'—The term 'Hi' has been used here to support the expression "I engage Myself in action" used in the preceding verse.

The Lord declares that it is impossible for Him not to perform action. But if it is so assumed that He does not perform action—in this sense the expression 'Yadi jātu' (If ever) has been used.

The term 'Atandritaḥ' means that actions should be performed very carefully and promptly, renouncing indolence and heedlessness. By doing so affinity for actions is renounced. As a stiff twig is easily broken but an elastic one can't be easily broken, similarly affinity for actions is renounced if they are performed carefully and promptly but it is not renounced if they are performed indolently and heedlessly. Therefore, the Lord in the nineteenth verse has used the term 'Samācara' (Perform well) and here the term 'Autandritaḥ' (Unwearied) has been used.

If there is recollection of an action time and again, it means that there has been an error (desire, attachment, incompletion,

indolence, heedlessness, indifference etc.) in the performance of action and so affinity for it has not been renounced.

'Mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ'— By this expression the Lord seems to declare that those who follow His path really deserve to be called human beings while those who while away the time because of indolence and heedlessness, and demand their rights don't deserve to be called human beings even in human-garb.

In the twenty-first verse of this chapter the Lord declared, "Whatever a great man does, the same is done by others as well; and whatever standard he sets, is followed by others," while here He declares,"Men in everyway follow My path". It means that a great man is a model for the human world only while the Lord is a model for the three worlds.

The Lord incarnates in the world to set an example to other people. He who does not live for himself knows the art of living in the world. The world is an educational institution where we have to learn how to do good to others by renouncing desire, attachment and selfishness etc., and through this lesson we have to attain salvation. The only aim of human life is to perform the duty by serving others and doing good to them including the members of the family and try to lead one another to salvation.

'Utsīdeyurime lokā na kuryām karma cedaham'— The Lord in the twenty-third verse explained the harm if He performed action unwearied and now in the twenty-fourth verse He explains the harm if he did not perform action.

Though it is not possible for the Lord not to perform action, yet if it is assumed—in this sense the Lord has used the term 'Cet' (If). This expression means that a man should not be attached to inaction (Gītā 2/47). Therefore, the Lord by citing His own example says that He performs action though there is nothing unattained which remains to be attained by Him. And if He did not perform action (according to the caste and order of life in which He has incarnated), He should be the creator of confusion of castes and destruction of the people. It is so because by renouncing their duty, men will also be steeped in the mode of ignorance (Gītā 14/18).

The Lord is a model in the three worlds and all beings follow Him. Therefore, if the Lord does not perform His duty, no one in the three worlds will perform his duty and thus they will have a downfall.

'Saṁkarasya ca kartā syāmupahanyāmimāḥ prajāḥ'— If the Lord did not perform action (duty), these worlds would perish and He should be the root of their destruction but this is not possible.

The term 'Saṁkara' stands for the mixture of two castes. Arjuna in the fortieth and the forty-first verses of the first chapter said, "If I fight the family will be ruined. With the ruin of the family, the immemorial religious rites of the family will be destroyed. With the destruction of the religious rites, impiety will overcome the whole family. By the prevalence of impiety, the women of the family will become corrupt. With the corruption of women, confusion of castes (intermingling of castes) will ensue." Thus Arjuna meant to say that war would lead to the confusion of castes*. But the Lord contradicts his statement by citing His own example when He declares that the confusion of castes would arise by the non-performance of duty. Therefore, here Lord Kṛṣṇa seems to urge Arjuna to wage the war otherwise he would be the creator of the confusion of castes.

* Even according to the argument of Arjuna non-performance of duty (action) is the cause of the confusion of castes. Confusion of castes arises only when women become corrupt, and they become corrupt by the non-performance of their duty. If women hold that they should perform their duty by remaining chaste in the same way as their husbands performed their duty by sacrificing their lives, they can't neglect their duty. Thus by performing their duty, they will maintain their chastity and there will not arise confusion of castes.

An Important Fact

The Lord answers Arjuna's question, "Why do You urge me to be engaged in this terrible action?" In the twenty-second, the twenty-third and the twenty-fourth verses by citing His own example that He engages Himself in action though He has nothing to do and nothing to attain in the three worlds. Therefore, He urges him to be engaged in action.

The Lord gives Arjuna the hint that He has accepted to be his chariot driver and he is the chariot-warrior. He as a chariot driver is performing His duty very carefully and efficiently so that other people may follow His example as He is a model for them. So he should also perform his duty of a Kṣatriya (member of the warrior class) carefully and efficiently.

Link:–Having described the need of the performance of duty by Him, the Lord in the next two verses urges the man of knowledge to perform action carefully.

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥ २५ ॥
न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् ।
जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ॥ २६ ॥

saktāḥ karmaṇyavidvāṁso yathā kurvanti bhārata
kuryādvidvāṁstathāsaktaścikīrṣurlokasaṁgraham
na buddhibhedaṁ janayedajñānāṁ karmasaṅginām
joṣayetsarvakarmāṇi vidvānyuktaḥ samācaran

As the ignorant men act from attachment to action, O Bhārata (Arjuna), so should the wise act without attachment, wishing the welfare of the world. 25

Let no wise man established in the self unsettle the minds of ignorant people who are attached to action; he should set others to act, himself performing his duties with devotion. 26

Comment:

'Saktāḥ karmaṇyavidvāṁso yathā kurvanti bhārata'— The expression 'Saktāḥ avidvāṁsaḥ' has been used for those ignorant men attached to worldly pleasures who have full faith in the scriptures, the ordinance of the scriptures and also the actions sanctioned by the scriptures, who are neither enlightened nor vile but are attached to actions, pleasures and objects. They are called ignorant (unwise) because of their desire, though they have bookish knowledge of the scriptures. They are learned but are not enlightened. They are called ignorant beacause they perform actions for themselves.

Such ignorant people perform their duty scrupulously according to the ordinance of the scriptures without heedlessness and indolence because they hold that it will not bear fruit if it is not performed scrupulously according to the strict scriptural ordinance. The Lord urges the wise people to act in the same way without attachment for the welfare of the world.

'Kuryādvidvāṁstathāsaktaś-cikīrṣurlokasaṁgraham'— 'Asaktah and 'Vidvān'–Unattached wise men are the enlightened souls* who are totally free from desire, feeling of 'mine', lust, favouristism,

* The supreme state (of God-Realization) which is obtained by men of renunciation is also attained by men of action (Gītā 5/4-5), yet in that state also there is a little difference in their marks and natures according to the path each followed. The men of renunciation remain indifferent to actions while men of action perform actions very prompty. This difference is not hard and fast. It is found in some realized souls.

selfishness etc., and who have not the least attachment to body and objects etc.

The expression 'Lokasaṁgrahaṁ cikīrṣuḥ' (Wishing the welfare of the world) has been used for the expression 'Lokasaṁgrahaṁ evāpi saṁpaśyan' (With a view to the welfare of the masses) used in the twentieth verse of this chapter and explained in the twenty-first verse.

All actions of wise men are naturally performed for the welfare of the world. They have no egoistic notion that they are engaged in the welfare of others. As a vuluptuary is attached to sensual pleasures, the greedy to riches and the infatuated to the family, the wise are engrossed in the welfare of all beings, naturally without any egoistic feeling. Because of the total renunciation of affinity for the materialistic world their so-called bodies, senses, minds and intellects etc., are also included in the term 'Loka' (World) used in the expression 'Loka saṁgraha' (Welfare of the world).

People think that such wise men have a desire to be engrossed in the welfare of the world but in fact they have no desire at all. They regard the body, senses, mind, intellect, objects, position, riches ability and all the resources as of the world and for the world which they really are. So all of them automatically remain engaged in rendering service to the world without any hope of reward.

The terms 'Yathā' (As) and 'Tathā' (So) have been used to point out that as ignorant men scrupulously act for their selfish motive, so the wise should act, without attachment, aiming at the welfare of the world. When the wise thus perform actions, for the welfare and salvation of all beings, good and sweet feelings automatically propagate.

An ignorant person performs action scrupulously in order to reap its fruit while a wise man is neither attached to the fruit of action nor has any duty to perform. So it is possible for him that he may be indifferent to actions. Therefore, the Lord orders him to act without attachment.

In the twenty-first verse a great (wise) man was called a model but here he has been called a follower. It means that a wise man may either be a leader (model) or a follower, good to the world is automatically done by him. For example Lord Rāma preaches the gospel to the subjects and also goes into exile by obeying His father. In both cases welfare of the world is done by Him because He has nothing to do either with the performance or non-performance of actions.

The wise man who performs actions without attachment having no desire for its fruit, automatically leaves an impression on the ignorant people who are attached to action whether it is clearly seen or not. Not only people but beasts and birds are also influenced by his feelings and actions.

Something Note-Worthy

So long as a man does not perform prescribed actions without desire for fruit, his cycle of birth and death continues. As long as he works for himself, he has to act because the self is eternal but an action and its fruit are perishable. Therefore, it is every one's obligatory duty to work for the welfare of others without any selfish motive.

The Discipline of Action (Performance of action without desire for fruit) seems difficult because we attach importance to the worldly objects. If we resolve that we have to perform all actions for the welfare of others without any desire, the path of action will become easy here and now.

In fact there is no importance of the object, rather it is of its use. That use is significant only when one does not attach much value to the object. No worldly object is personal, it belongs to the world. But it has been given to us so that we may make proper use of it. When we regard it as our own, it becomes difficult for us to use it for the welfare of others. In fact it is neither an object nor an action which leads to bondge but it is attachment to it which binds.

The wise perform actions for the welfare of the world without any egoistic notion because they hold that whatsoever possessions such as body, senses, mind, intellect, position etc., there are have been acquired

from the world and they belong to the world. So it is honest on our part to use the worldly materials in the service of humanity. There is nothing creditable in returning trust money to its owner. In doing so we are simply relieved of our responsibility— a debt has been repaid. In like manner, by using our possessions in the service of the world we merely repay the debt we owe to the world because it is only from the world that we have received these possessions.

'Na buddhibhedaṁ janayedajñānāṁ karmasaṅginām joṣayetsarvakarmāṇi vidvānyuktaḥ samācaran'— The wise man without attachment who has been described in the twenty-fifth verse by the expression 'Asaktaḥ vidvān,' here has been called 'Yuktaḥ vidvān'.

The enlightened soul who remains, equanimous, who is unmoved under all circumstances, whose senses are controlled and to whom a clod, a stone and a piece of gold are the same, is called 'Yuktaḥ, Vidvān' (Wise man established in the self) (Gītā 6/8).

The ignorant men attached to prescribed action, who have been described in the twenty-fifth verse by the expression 'Saktāḥ, Avidvāṁsaḥ', here have been mentioned by the expression 'Karmasaṅginām, Ajñānām'. These people have been called 'Karmasaṅgī' (Attached to action) and 'Ajñānī' (Ignorant) because they perform the action prescribed by the scriptures for themselves (in order to gain pleasures, honour and praise etc).

Great men have greater responsibility because common men follow them. Therefore, the Lord urges the wise man that he should not perform any such action or make any such utterance as may lead the ignorant to a down fall which has been called here 'Budhibhedam' (Unsettlement in the minds). Therefore, a wise man should perform virtuous actions according to his caste and order of life for the welfare of other people so that they may be inspired to perform their duty without any desire for fruit. This rule also applies to important persons of the society and the family that they should perform their duties scrupulously so that they may set an example for other members of the society and the family.

Some of the examples of unsettling the minds of ignorant people are as follows:–

1. Knowledge is superior to action. Actions bind a man. This type of preaching undermines the faith in action.

2. Everybody performs actions with a selfish motive. Desire for fruit is natural. Why should a man perform action, if he has no desire for its fruit? This sort of utterance unsettles the minds of ignorant people.

3. When a person performs actions with the desire for their fruits, he has to take birth again and again to reap the fruit of his actions. Thus common people cease to have their faith in the fruit of action. This sort of utterance unsettles the minds of ignorant people. Consequently, they renounce the performance of virtuous actions, though they remain attached to their fruit.

The fact is that it is not action, but attachment which leads to bondage. Thus an enlightened soul instead of unsettling the minds of ignorant people should perform his obligatory duty according to his caste and order of life and also get it performed by others so that they, instead of having a downfall, may rise to a higher level. He should admire their virtuous actions and make them aware of the evil actions so that they may renounce them. Moreover, he should explain to them that it is not proper to have a desire for the fruit of virtuous actions such as sacrifice, charity and adoration etc., because this fruit is meagre. It is just like selling a precious jewel for pebbles and so it is not a wise act. If they act without desire for fruit, it will lead them to bliss.

Similarly he should not unsettle the minds of ignorant people about adoration and spiritual practice. Generally people say that it is futile to chant the Lord's name without concentration. But the enlightened soul should preach that chanting of the Lord's name never goes in vain. But if the name

is chanted with concentration, it expedites spiritual progress. Every one possesses some virtue or the other. Therefore, when an enlightened soul wants to preach a sermon to a common man, he instead of reproaching and insulting him, should praise his virtues and then should preach the sermon. Such a sermon makes a strong impression upon the common man. The chief of a family or the society should also do the same.

The Lord through the terms 'Samācaran' (Duly performing) and 'Joṣayet' (Should get them to perform) orders a wise man (i) to perform his duty scrupulously according to the scriptural injunctions (ii) he should make the ignorant men who are attached to action, perform their duty.

Ostentation in the performance of actions is hypocrisy which is a mark of demoniac nature (Gītā 16/4). Therefore, the Lord orders people to perform actions not as an ostentation, but for the welfare of the people. An enlightened soul should set other people, who are attached to action, to act by performing his duty scrupulosly without attachment and also by preaching the sermon. He should inspire them to discard selfishness and should also inspire them through his example and precept to perform prescribed actions and to refrain from forbidden actions.

Link:–Now the Lord distinguishes the unwise from the wise in the next verses.

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।
अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ।। २७ ।।

prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ
ahaṅkāravimūḍhātmā kartāhamiti manyate

All actions are performed in all cases by the modes of nature. He whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks, "I am the doer." 27

Comment:

'Prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ'— All the functions of the world such as birth and growth of bodies and plants, flow of the Ganges and change in the worldly things etc., as well actions such as seeing, hearing, eating and drinking etc., are carried out by the modes of nature. But a man deluded by egoism divides all activities performed by cosmic energy into two parts — To the first part belong actions which he thinks he does not perform them but they occur naturally– such as formation of the body and digestion of food etc. The second part consists of those which he thinks he performs them – such as seeing, speaking and eating etc. A man out of delusion regards himself as the doer of the latter actions. Intellect, ego, mind, five subtle elements, ten organs of perception and actions, and five objects of senses — these are also called the modes of nature because they are the evolutes of the three modes of nature (goodness, passion and ignorance). The Lord declares that all actions are performed by the modes of nature, not by the self.

'Ahaṅkāravimūḍhātmā' —'Egoism' is a state of mind while he (the self) is the knower of that state. But by an error he identifies the self with that state and thus he is deluded by egoism.

As the body denoted by the term 'Idam' is different from the self, so is egoism. 'Idam' can't be 'I'— this is the principle. But when he regards egoism as self, he is known 'Ahaṅkāravimūḍhātmā' (One whose mind is deluded by egoism). This assumed egoism is not wiped out by efforts as efforts involve ego. But it is wiped out

by non-acceptance viz., non-assumption.

An Important Fact

Egoism is of two kinds:—

(i) Real* as 'I am' (one's existence).

(ii) Unreal (assumed) — as 'I am body'.

'Real egoism' is natural and eternal while unreal egoism is unnatural and perishable. Real egoism can be forgotten but can't perish while unreal egoism may appear but can't exist. A man commits an error that he forgets the real egoism (self) and assumes the unreal egoism (I am body) to be true.

'Kartāhamiti manyate'— Though all actions are performed by modes of nature, yet the person whose mind is deluded by egoism, thinks that he is the doer because he regards egoism as the self. It is because of this egoism that he identifies the Self with the body, senses, mind and thus regards the self as the doer. This egoism is self made and so it can be blotted out by the self. The method to blot it out is through non-assumption. This false assumption can be rooted out if he realizes that he (the self) is different from the body, senses and mind etc.

Performance of actions and non-performance of actions — all are activities. Sleeping, waking, sitting, walking and trance etc., are included in activities which take place in nature, while the self is free from performance and non-performance of actions. He (self) is the illuminator and knower of them. A man automatically remains established in the self. But he (the self) assumes his affinity for actions. This assumed affinity is called 'egoism'.

An Important Fact

As a wave is a fragment of an ocean, so the ocean and the wave belong to the same class. Similarly the body, a fragment of the world and the world belong to the same class. The soul (self) is different from the world or the body. The man does not take the world to be his own Self 'I' but he does take even though wrongly, his body to be so.

Just as the wave without ocean has no independent existence of its own, similarly without the world, there cannot be any separate existence of the body. But when a man, whose mind is deluded by egoism, identifies the self with the body, several desires are born in him as he has desires for family, riches, honour, praise and pleasures etc. He does not realize that by identifying the self with the body he is already bound and these desires will strengthen the bondage and will hurl him into the abyss of adversity.

Even though the striver during his disciplinning period, may not feel that he is above and beyond the modes of Prakṛti but when he accepts to be so with a strong faith he starts feeling himself beyond Prakṛti. Thus just as a person is bound due to his wrong assumptions in the same way he is freed from the shackles through the correct a assumptions, because it is a principle that an assumed fact ceases to be by unassuming it. The same fact has been pointed out by the Lord in the eighth verse of the fifth chapter by the term 'Manyeta' (Should believe) when He declares, "The man, who is united with the Divine and knows the truth, thinks that he does nothing at all". By this sort of thinking a striver realizes the truth.

When even the unreal assumptions such as 'I am the body' 'I am doer' become so steady that it seems difficult to renounce them; why will the reality 'I am not the body' and 'I am not a doer' not become steady? And once the reality is confirmed, how can it be abandoned?

* Real egoism in fact is not egoism. It is an aggregate of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. It is called real because it never changes, while the unreal egoism changes. Today a man is uneducated. Having received schooling he says he is educated. Thus the unreal egoism changes. But he (the self) remains the same. As soon as he ceases to identify himself with the unreal egoism, the real egoism as the aggregate of Truth, Consciousness and Bliss remains.

तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।
गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सज्जते ॥ २८ ॥

tattvavittu mahābāho guṇakarmavibhāgayoḥ
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate

Having the true knowledge of the respective spheres of modes and actions, the great soul does not get attached with them, O mighty-armed, by holding that it is modes which are moving among the modes. 28

Comment:

'Tattvavittu mahābāho guṇakarma-vibhāgayoḥ'— Here the term 'Tu' (But) has been used to distinguish the enlightened soul from the person whose mind is deluded by egoism described in the preceding verse.

The three modes of goodness, of passion and of ignorance are born of nature. The entire universe including the body, senses, mind intellect, creatures and objects etc., is constituted of the three modes. This is the sphere of the modes of nature. The actions performed with the body etc., is the sphere of action.

The modes (objects) and actions are kaleidoscopic and transitory. The matter has its origin and end; actions have a beginning and end to know this fact properly is, having a true knowledge of modes and actions along with their divisions. This is the truth about the modes of nature and their actions. The soul (Self) never undergoes any action. It is ever unconnected and changeless i.e., it has no connection with things and actions. This is the truth about the self (soul).

The ignorant, when he assumes his relation with the two spheres of Modes and Actions, gets himself bound. Philosophically the main reason of this bondage is ignorance but from the stand-point of a striver, the main cause is 'attachment.' Attachment is a product of indiscrimination. It perishes when discrimination is aroused. This discrimination is particularly found in human beings. What is needed is simply to give due importance and to arouse this. Therefore the striver should wipe out the attachment.

The striver who does not assume his affinity for modes (things) and actions, knows the truth of the modes of nature and their actions. He may know the reality either of the modes of nature and their action or the self, the result is the same i.e., he knows the reality of the two.

How To Know This Truth?

1. Though the Supreme self dwells in the body, yet it neither acts nor is tainted (Gītā 13/31). The evolute of nature (body, senses, mind, intellect etc.) is called 'this'. 'This' cannot be 'I'. When 'this' (body etc.) is not 'I', how can the actions performed by this (body etc.) be 'mine'? It means that the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., are the evolutes of Nature while the self is totally unconnected with them. So how can 'the self' be the doer of actions? He who realizes this fact is not bound. When he realizes that he does nothing at all (Gītā 5/8), it means that he realizes that he (the self) is different from actions.

2. All the movements such as seeing, hearing, eating and drinking etc., are actions while food stuff and liquids etc., are objects. These actions and objects are known by the sense-organs (eye, ear, tongue etc.). These sense-organs are known by the mind, the mind is known by the intellect and the intellect is known by egoism (I'ness). This egoism is also illumined by the Sentient Light Which is the knower, illuminator and base of all of them.

How to know the self (Sentient) Which is beyond egoism?

In sound sleep though intellect merges in ignorance, yet having awaken from sleep a man says that he slept soundly. It means that he existed even during the sound sleep. Otherwise he would have not known (experienced) that he slept soundly. Thus every one in every state realizes 'I am'. Those are called enlightened souls who, have

renounced their affinity even for 'I' (egoism) and have realized the self.

We have our real affinity for changeless God while our affinity for the kaleidoscopic nature is merely assumed. If we renounce our affinity for Nature through discrimination, it is known as 'Jñānayoga' (Discipline of Knowledge). If this affinity is renounced by performing duty for the welfare of others, it is known as 'Karmayoga' (Discipline of Action). When we renounce our affinity for Nature, we realize Yoga union with God. Otherwise it is merely Jñāna (Knowledge) and Karma (Action). Those who realize this real affinity for God, having renounced the affinity for Nature, are 'Tattvavit' (Enlightened souls).

'Guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta'—The body, senses, mind and intellect etc., are also called modes as they are born of the modes of nature and all the actions are performed by them. Out of ignorance an ignorant man by assuming his affinity for these modes becomes a doer of actions i.e., by regarding the actions and objects as his own, he becomes a doer. But when he realizes that the self is different and is the illuminator, he can't think that he is a doer.

A train, having received power from the engine, runs with the help of the driver. The engine supplies power but it reaches its destination only when the driver drives it. The engine has no senses, mind and intellect. Therefore, it needs a driver (man) with senses, mind and intellect. But a man has an engine in the form of body and has also senses, mind and intellect to drive it. But the senses, mind and intellect function having received inspiration from the source of light. First, the light is reflected in the intellect. From the intellect it goes to the mind. From the mind it goes to the senses and then the engine (body) functions. Intellect, mind, senses and the body – these are modes and their illuminator is the self which is not connected with them. Therefore, the modes are acting on the modes.

Mostly the people follow the example set by great men. Therefore, the Lord declares that as a great man holds that it is the modes which are acting on the modes and does not get attached to them while he works for the welfare of the world; similarly a striver should also do the same.

A Vital Fact Pertaining to Nature And Spirit

There is always an attraction between senses and the objects if they belong to the same class. Ears have attraction for words, skin for touch, eyes for form, tongue for taste and nose for smell. Thus all the five senses have attraction for their sense objects. Any sense can't have an attraction for the object of another sense. For example the eye can't have attraction for melodious words. The self in fact has no attraction for Nature as It is not of the same character. It is changeless, eternal, pure and uniform, while the Nature is quite otherwise. But by identifying Itself with a body a fragment of Nature, It has attraction for Nature. The attraction of the embodied soul for the worldly objects is really attraction of Nature in Nature. The sense of doership and enjoyership are in Nature, not in the pure self.

Lord Kṛsna in the thirty-first verse of the thirteenth chapter declared about the self, "Though It dwells in the body, yet It neither acts not is tainted." The soul is said to be the cause, in regard to the experience of pleasure and pain" (Gītā 13/20) when It (the soul) resides in nature (Gītā 13/21) i.e., It identifies Itself with body etc. It means that it is because of Its identification with Nature (body and senses etc.) that It becomes happy and sad.

Because, Prakṛti, inert as it is, is incapable of experiencing pleasure and pain and the 'Self' (conscious) alone cannot become enjoyer without the association Prakṛti.

The self is free from the Kaleidoscopic, qualities of Prakṛti but it is certainly capable of assuming relation with Prakṛti. It is not at all inert like a stone on the contrary it is Knowledge incarante. Had the soul not been competent to assume affinity, how could it establish relation with the Prakṛti; how could it assume the activities of Prakṛti taking place in it (the soul); how could it assume doership or enjoyership in it ? Assuming or unassuming relation is a feeling and not an action.

The self possesses competence to establish relation or otherwise; but it is incompetent to act. Only kaleidoscopic agents can have the capability of doing actions. The Self is by nature changeless where as Prakṛti changes every moment. In other words activeness is innate in Prakṛti. Therefore by establishing affinity, the Prakṛti the 'Self' supposes itself to be the doer (Gītā 3/27).

It is a merit rather than a demerit of the soul that It undergoes no change. It ever remains the same and uniform. It can't change in the same way as ice can't be hot. But It is free and so it depends upon It whether It accepts Its affinity for nature or not though really It has no affinity with Nature.

When the soul identifies Itself with the body, It has attraction for nature and then It performs actions and has to reap their fruit in the form of pleasure and pain. In fact, pleasure and pain have no separate existence. Therefore, the Lord urges men to renounce their assumed affinity for nature by holding that it is the modes which are acting on the modes while he (soul or self) is quite detached from them.

As a matter of fact disassociation is already there and association is wrongly assumed one. Therefore it is required to give up this assumed relation and to realise the fact that it is only Modes that are moving on Modes.

'Iti matvā na sajjate'— Here the term 'Matvā' has been used for 'Knowing'. An enlightened soul distinguishes the soul from nature and so he is not attached to the modes of nature.

Here by using the term 'Matvā' the Lord seems to order strivers not to be attached to the modes of nature by regarding them as different from the self.

An Important Fact

The methods followed by a Karmayogī (man of Action) and a Jñānayogī (man of Knowledge) are different. The former tries to wipe out his assumed identity with body etc. So in the Bhāgavata it is mentioned, "The persons with desires deserve to follow the path of action" (11/20/7). Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Gītā has also laid emphasis on the performance of duty when He declares "Not by non-performance of action does a man attain actionlessness" (Gītā 3/4). "For a sage who wishes to attain to Yoga, action is said to be the means" (Gītā 6/3). A Karmayogī performs actions for others not for himself; therefore, he does not become an enjoyer. When he does not become an enjoyer, his sense of doership automatically perishes. He becomes a doer only in order to reap the fruit of action. He does not remain a doer if he does not desire the fruit of action. Therefore infact a Karmayogī also does not become a doer.

In Sāṅkhyayoga (Discipline of Knowledge) there is predominance of discrimination. Such a striver holds 'It is the modes which are acting on the modes'. By thinking so he does not become the doer of actions. The same fact has been pointed out by the Lord in the twenty-ninth verse of the thirteenth chapter when He declares, "He who sees that all actions are performed by nature alone and that the self is not the doer, he verily sees." When he does not remain a doer, there does not arise any question of his being an enjoyer.

In this chapter the Lord has laid great emphasis on the performance of actions; as "It was by action alone that Janaka and others attained perfection" (3/20); "I engage Myself in action" (3/22); "A wise man also performs actions for the welfare of the world without attachment, as an ignorant man acts from attachment" (3/25-26). It proves that performance of actions is good in everyway.

प्रकृतेर्गुणसंमूढाः सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु ।
तानकृत्स्नविदो मन्दान्कृत्स्नविन्न विचालयेत् ॥ २९ ॥

prakṛterguṇasaṁmūḍhāḥ sajjante guṇakarmasu
tānakṛtsnavido mandānkṛtsnavinna vicālayet

Those who are deluded by the modes of nature remain attached to those modes and actions. The man of perfect knowledge should not unsettle the minds of the ignorant who know only a little. 29

Comment:

'Prakṛterguṇasaṁmūḍhāḥ sajjante guṇakarmasu'— The three modes (of goodness, of passion and of ignorance) of nature bind a man. The mode of goodness (Sattva) binds by attachment to happiness and knowledge; the mode of passion (Rājasa) by attachment to action and the mode of ignorance (Tāmasa) by heedlessness, indolence and sleep (Gītā 14/6-8). Here in this verse is the description of those ignorant people who are deluded by the modes of nature i.e., who are bound by them but who have faith in the scriptures, in prescribed virtuous actions and in the fruit of those actions. These people have been called 'the ignorant people attached to action' in the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses. They are attached to actions and objects in order to enjoy the worldly and heavenly pleasures. Therefore they can't understand the advice how to rise above them. So the Lord has called them ignorant.

'Tānakṛtsnavido mandān'— Ignorant people perform virtuous actions with the expectation of the perishable fruits. They remain attached to the acquired materials such as wealth etc., and have a desire to acquire the unacquired ones. It is because of their attachment and desire that they don't know reality about the modes (objects) and actions.

Ignorant people know what prescribed actions are and how they should be performed well, but they don't know the reality about modes and actions. So it has been said that they know only a little i.e., they are men of imperfect knowledge and they have been called ignorant because they are interested in enjoying worldly pleasures and prosperity.

'Kṛtsnavinna vicālayet'— The man of perfect knowledge who knows the reality about the sphere of the modes and actions should not unsettle the minds of the ignorant otherwise they would renounce virtuous actions and would have a downfall. Such a wise man has been called 'unattached wise man' in the twenty-fifth verse and 'balanced (established in the self) wise man' in the twenty-sixth verse of this chapter.

The Lord in the twenty-fifth verse ordered a wise man to act by using the term 'Kuryāt' while in the twenty-sixth verse He ordered him to engage the ignorant men in action by the term 'Joṣayet'. But here the Lord by the expression 'Na vicālayet' instead of ordering him, makes a bit of relaxation by declaring that he should not at least unsettle the minds of the ignorant with either his hints or words or actions. The reason is that the Lord does not enforce strict discipline on the liberated souls nar do the scriptures. Actions are automatically performed by their so-called bodies for the welfare of the world*.

An enlightened soul whether he is a Karma-yogī or a Jñānayogī has not the least attachment either to actions or objects because he knows the truth that there is no real affinity between him and actions or objects.

The ignorant perform virtuous actions in order to gain heaven. Therefore, the Lord has ordered the wise men not to unsettle the minds of the ignorant people with their hints, words or actions otherwise they would lose their faith and interest in virtuous actions and would renounce them; and it would lead them to a downfall. Therefore, such people should be dissuaded from the desire for fruit rather than from actions prescribed by the scriptures. It is not only proper but also indispensable to dissuade them from the desire for the fruit of action in order to release them from the bondage of the cycle of birth and death.

* There is difference between 'Kriyā' and 'Karma'. When the person has the egoistic notion that he is the doer, his 'Kriyā' becomes a 'Karma' which bears threefold fruit–pleasant, unpleasant and mixed (Gītā 18/12). But when he has no notion of doership, his 'Kriyā' does not turn into 'Karma' i.e., does not bear fruit, it is performed just like an impulse (nature) (Gītā 3/33).

Link:—The Lord in the next verse explains what a striver should do to be free from the attachment to action and its fruit.

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।
निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ ३० ॥

mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi saṁnyasyādhyātmacetasā
nirāśīrnirmamo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigatajvaraḥ

Surrendering all actions to Me, with the discriminative insight being free from desire, the sense of mine and mental strain, do your duty of waging the war. 30

Comment:

'Mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi saṁnyasyādhyātmacetasā'—Generally a striver holds that he has to perform the obligatory actions but they lead him to bondage. In order to clarify his misconception the Lord urges him to surrender all actions to Him with the discriminative insight without having the least affinity for them. In fact all the actions of the world are performed by the Lord's power. The body, senses, mind, objects and power etc., are the Lord's and the Lord is his. By thinking so when a striver performs actions, those actions instead of leading him to bondage, lead him to salvation.

Every person knows that he can't keep the body, senses, mind, intellect and material objects etc., under his control according to his desire. They belong to the nature while he (the self) is a fragment of the Lord (Gītā 15/7). So real surrender consists in accepting them of the Lord's rather than his own. Therefore, 'Surrender' means the renunciation of the assumed affinity for objects and actions by attaching importance to discrimination.

By the expression 'Adhyātmacetasā' the Lord means to say that he should have a spiritual aim (of God) rather than a mundane one. The man who has fined his aim, has the discriminative insight. In fact a man's aim or necessity is to attain the imperishable (spiritual) while his desire is to gain the perishable. A striver should decide the aim of his life instead of having a desire.

From either the philosophical or the scientific point of view the material objects such as body etc., can't be proved to be one's own. They have been bestowed upon him so that he may make their right use. But when he lays claim to them, he is bound. Therefore, when a striver through discrimination accepts the objects and actions as the Lord's, it means that he surrenders them to Him.

In the verse the expression 'Adhyātmacetasā' has been specially used. It means that it is out of ignorance that the perishable body or world seems to be one's own. If discrimination is applied, the perishable body or world can't seem one's own, only the Lord will appear one's own. Attachment to the world leads to a downfall, while detachment leads to progress (i.e., upliftment).

"Sense of 'mine' is death and the sense 'it is not mine' is immortality" (Mahā. Śānti. 13/4), Āśvamedhika 51/29).

An Imoportant Fact Pertaining to Surrender

The Lord urges a man to surrender all actions to Him because he considers the body, senses, mind, intellect, life-breath, material and actions his own and for himself. But in fact these are neither his nor can be his. How can the perishable have affinity for the imperishable? Therefore, surrender all actions either to the world or to nature or to God, the result will be the same because the world is the evolute of nature and God is the Lord of nature. Thus both

the world and nature belong to God. Thus a striver should think that he is God's and the so-called his possessions are also God's i.e., he should renounce his attachment to them. In that case he has to expect nothing either from the world or from God. The Lord Himself looks after his wants (needs). When a striver surrenders his body etc., to Him, they don't seem to him to be his own. If they appear to him to be his own, it means that he has not surrendered them to Him. Therefore the Lord has exhorted a striver to surrender them to Him with a discriminative insight. Thus when a striver surrenders them to God, he comes to know the truth that in fact they are the Lord's, not his.

The fact of surrender to God is so unique that even if we surrender out of feeling of surfeit, it brings us immense benefit. In fact actions, objects, the body and the self are not ones' own. Actions can be surrendered even after their accomplishment. But real surrender is only when we renounce our affinity with objects and actions. This abandonment is possible when we discern that instruments (body etc.), objects, actions and the embodied self are only God's. A striver commits an error that he tries to surrender the actions and objects to God but he does not surrender his body etc., and the self to Him. Thus his surrender remains incomplete. Therefore, a striver should think that all the objects including his body, senses, mind, intellect and the Self belong to God which are really His.

A mere outward renunciation of actions and objects is not real surrender. The real surrender consists in regarding the objects and possessions as His. If a striver surrenders them to God by regarding them as his own, the Lord reciprocates by giving them manifold in the same way as the seeds sown turn into a rich harvest. But still it is in a limited amount. But when he surrenders them to Him regarding them as His, He offers Himself to him and álso feels indebted to him.

The Lord is very much pleased with this sort of surrender. This surrender does not help the Lord in anyway. But by doing so the striver is released from the bondage of actions. When a baby hands over the key lying in the courtyard to the father, the father is very much pleased with the baby and wishes it a long life. Why? The reason is that the baby has generous feelings when it offers the key to the father though it belongs to him. Similarly God is pleased with the striver. Who offers all objects, the body and the self to Him and is indebted to him.

An Important Fact Pertaining to Desire

The Lord by His grace has abundantly bestowed upon a human being, the materials for his existence and spiritual practice including discrimination. When he, disregarding his discrimination, uses the things for his selfish motive and has a desire to acquire more things, he is bound and he has to follow the cycle of birth and death. Every man knows this reality that the family, circumstances, ability, power, body, senses, mind and intellet etc., have been acquired; they were neither his in the past nor will remain his in future because they never remain the same, they are kaleidoscopic. If, having realized this fact, he ceases to depend on them without attaching importance to them, he can attain salvation without any doubt. Attachment to them, is the root of bondage. His attachment to them gives birth to several other desires which lead him to sins, pains, sorrows and hells etc. All these things are perishable while the self is imperishable. So he should perform his duty by renouncing desires.

Here a doubt may arise how he will be inclined to act without desire. The clarification is that a man is inclined to act for the satisfaction of desires as well as to get rid of them. Common men perform actions in order to satisfy their desires while strivers perform actions for the purification of their souls in order to get rid of desires (Gītā 5/11). In fact actions are performed in order to get rid of desires rather than to satisfy them.

The aim of human life is to attain God. When this aim is achieved, nothing remains to be acquired. Only those people, who have forgotten the real aim of human life i.e., God-Realization, remain inclined to act in order to

satisfy their desires. The Lord has called such people wretched or pitiful as they seek the fruits (of their actions) (Gītā 2/49). On the other hand those strivers, who perform actions by renouncing their fruits in order to be free from desires, have been called wise (Gītā 2/51).

The feelings of rendering selfless service, Self-Realization and God-Realization are aims rather than desires, while the feeling to acquire the perishable objects is desire. Therefore, it is wrong to think that a man is not inclined to act without desire. Actions are performed scrupulously in order to attain the aim.

The man (soul) is a fragment of God but his disinclination for God and inclination towards the world gives birth to necessity as well as desires. When he totally renounces his assumed affinity for the world, his necessity is fulfilled and he gets rid of desires.

'Nirāśīrnirmamo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigatajvaraḥ'— When all actions and objects are surrendered to God, even then a fragment of desire, the sense of mine and grief can remain. For example we have offered a book to some one. When we see him studying that book, we think that he is studying the book given by us. In order to free us from this fragment, the Lord urges us not to have a desire to acquire anything, not to be attached to the acquired things and not to be grieved for the lost things. The criterion for surrender is that a striver has no fragment of desire, the sense of mine and grief.

When a striver surrenders all actions and objects to God, sometimes because of the past impressions (influences) he feels that he has not got rid of desire, the sense if mineness and grief. Such a striver need not lose heart because only he who perceives desire, the sense of mineness and grief, becomes free from them. Similar is the case with egoism. Every human being fully deserves to get rid of desire, the sense of mine and grief.

In the whole Gītā the term 'Jvara' (Mental fever viz., grief) has been used only here. In a war a warrior is grieved at the death of his kith and kin. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa orders Arjuna to fight, delivered from grief, as it is his duty as a member of the warrior class. The Lord means to say that a striver should perform his duty by surrendering it to God, being free from desire, the sense of mineness and grief. Remaining equanimous in success and failure, pleasure and pain, the sense of mineness and aversion etc., is known as the state of 'Vigata jvaraḥ' (Freedom from grief). In fact all the mental defects such as the sense of mineness, aversion, worry, agitation and turmoil etc., are included in 'Jvara'.

An Important Fact

When a striver has God-Realization as the only goal of his life, all his possessions and things whether superior or inferior, are surrendered to God. Having surrendered his actions and objects, he surrenders the desire, the sense of mineness and grief which appear in him, to Him. Thus he becomes a staunch devotee with exclusive devotion.

For a sage who wishes to attain to Yoga, action is said to be the means (Gītā 6/3) because while performing actions he comes to know his defects (desire, the sense of mineness etc.)*. Therefore, in the twelfth verse of the twelfth chapter the renunciation of the fruit of action has been called better than meditation. The reason is that in meditation a striver pays attention to the point that the mind should not be volatile. When his mind is concentrated, he regards it as his success and does not pay heed to other defects such as desire and the sense of mineness etc. Therefore, the Lord in this verse orders Arjuna to perform his duty of fighting so that he may know his defects.

As the Lord in the forty-eighth verse of the second chapter ordered Arjuna to perform his duty being equanimous in success and failure, here He orders him to

* A volunteer offers his service being a member of the voluntary committee. But when he is honoured or praised, he relishes it i.e., derives pleasures out of it. This is his defect. Thus such defects are known only when actions are performed.

being free from desire, the sense of mine fight ness and grief. When even such a terrible (savage) deed as fighting can be performed with equanimity, what other action is there which cannot be performed with equanimity? Equanimity can be attained by holding "I am neither body, nor the body is mine nor it is for me" which is indeed a fact.

It is possible to do an action worth doing only when the striver's aim is focussed on God and not on the world. As the striver advances gradually on the path of God-Realization, the vices like desire, myness and attachment etc., diminish automatically and the striver experiences his Self to be positioned in equanimity and as soon as the experience of equanimity gets perfect, the doership is completely vanished and identification with the aim is established. As a rule the ego perishes when there remains no desire to do anything for one's own good gain.

Arjuna wants to attain salvation without performing his duty of fighting. When Arjuna inquires the way of salvation, the Lord orders him to fight as it is his duty. According to the Lord, salvation can be attained either through the path of action or knowledge or devotion.

Link:–Having stated His teaching (principle) in the preceding verse, now in the next two verses, the Lord substantiates the same.

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।
श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥ ३१ ॥

ye me matamidaṁ nityamanutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ
śraddhāvanto'nasūyanto mucyante te'pi karmabhiḥ

These men who constantly follow this teaching of Mine as declared in the previous verse with faith and without cavilling, are also released from the bondage of actions. 31

Comment:

'Ye me matamidaṁ nityamanutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ śraddhāvanto'nasūyanto'— Any person belonging to any caste, creed, sect and order of life etc., who wants to be released from the bondage of actions, should practise this discipline. By realizing the fact that the body, senses, mind, intellect, objects and actions etc., are not one's own, men are released from this bondage. 'Śraddhāvantaḥ' is he who has a firm faith in and devotion to the Lord and His discipline.

A man is released from bondage when he regards the material objects such as body etc., neither as his nor for him. Having faith in this reality it becomes easy to renounce the assumed affinity for the insentient.

A striver having faith only listens to the divine discourses and translates them into practice. This human body has been bestowed upon us so that we may realize God. So we should try to arouse a yearning to realize Him. When this yearning is aroused, other virtues such as faith, promptness and self-control etc., are naturally inculcated in our mind.

The Lord has laid emphasis on faith and also freedom from cavil because even a man of faith can have a carping spirit to some extent. So the Lord urges strivers to be totally free from cavil. The Lord also lays emphasis on this very fact while glorifying the study of the Gītā when He declares, "The man who hears this gospel with faith and an uncarping spirit is liberated (Gītā 18/71).

When a man holds that the discipline of the Lord is good but it reveals His boastful and egoistic nature; or how actions can lead to salvation when they are conducive to bondage — such opinions show a man's carping spirit. So a striver should be free

from this sort of carping spirit.

In fact all the objects belong to the Lord. But by an error a man regards them as his own and so he is bound. It is because of his attachment and desire that he has to suffer. Therefore, the Lord out of His grace and affection urges him to surrender all actions and things to Him so that he may attain eternal bliss, though He lacks nothing, He is perfect.

The Lord's teaching is called the universal principle. Here the Lord's teaching or discipline has been pointed out by the term 'Matam'. The Lord out of His natural simplicity and absence of vanity has called the universal principle as mere 'Mata.' His teaching ever remains the same without undergoing any modifications. It depends upon a man whether he has faith in it or not.

Here the adjective 'Nityam' (Constant) does not qualify 'Matam' (Teaching) but it modifies 'Anutiṣṭhanti' (Practise) (Follow) because the Lord is eternal (constant) and so all objects pertaining to Him are also eternal. His teaching is also eternal. So the Lord emphasizes that it should be practised constantly.

Question: — What is the teaching of the Lord and how should it be practised (followed)?

Answer: — All acquired things are not ours — this is the considered view of the Lord. Whatever materials — body, senses, mind, intellect, life-breath, riches, property, objects etc., there are, they are the evolutes of nature and the world is also the evolute of nature. So all of them have identification with the world; while the self, being a fragment of God, has Its identification with Him. Therefore, all of them are not our personal possessions but they have been bestowed upon us so that we may utilize them properly. Besides them the virtues such as good conduct, renunciation, dispassion, kindness and forgiveness etc., are also not personal; being divine traits they also belong to God. Had they been ours they would have also remained with us and no one could have acquired them without our permission. But it is not so. When we accept them as ours, we are proud of them and pride is the root of demoniac endowment.

When we regard a thing, which really is not ours, as ours, it binds us. The materialistic things such as body etc., are neither ours nor for us. Had they been ours, they might have provided us full satisfaction when we had acquired them. But they never satisfy us, they rather add fuel to the fire of desires. But if we realize God, we are fully satisfied and we attain perfection and nothing remains to be gained (acquired). As a lost child is not pleased and satisfied with any other woman (though she is also a mother) except his own mother, similarly we are not satisfied with any other thing except God-Realization. Therefore, so long as we have desire to acquire anything, it means that we have not acquired our own thing viz., God.

We neither brought the things with us, nor can carry them with us and at present also they are deserting us constantly. At present they are under our possession. It means that, we should use them for the welfare of the world rather than lay claim to them. The Lord is so generous and gracious that He bestows the things upon us in such a way that they appear to us to be ours. If we use them for our selfish motive it means that we misuse His generosity and grace. Therefore, a striver in order to rectify his error, should surrender them to Him with discriminative insight.

If a striver whose only aim is God-Realization, gives a serious thought to the topic, he will come to know the truth that all the acquired things such as the body, rank, right, education, knowledge, riches and property etc., belong to the world and so they should be utilized for the world. We may call them either of the world or of nature or of God, but they are not ours. So how can they be for us?

A striver has neither to regard a thing as his nor has to perform any action for him. The actions, which are performed by him for himself, bind him because the Lord declares, "One is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of

sacrifice" (Gītā 3/9). "Actions of the person who performs them for the sake of sacrifice (including the stored ones) are dissolved entirely" (Gītā 4/23).

God is the great Lord of all the worlds (Gītā 5/29). When a man regards himself as the lord of the objects and possessions, he forgets the real Lord and thinks of those objects and possessions. Therefore, a striver should live like a servant to the Lord Who is the only master of the entire universe. By becoming an instrument in His hands, he should perform his duty with the body, senses, mind, intellect and meterial bestowed upon him by Him without having any pride of ownership.

Having surrendered everything and action to God, he should not be swayed by the pairs of opposites such as profit and loss, honour and dishonour, pleasure and pain etc., because they are the gifts of God and so they are His. Performance of duty joyfully under the available circumstance means the practice of His teaching.

'Mucyante te'pi karmabhiḥ'—The Lord here seems to say to Arjuna that He was ordering him in clear terms to surrender actions to Him. By obeying Him he will undoubtedly be released from bondage. Moreover if other people also whom He has not ordered this way practise this teaching, they will also be released from bondage even though they may not believe in Him.

ये त्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम्।
सर्वज्ञानविमूढांस्तान्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥ ३२ ॥

ye tvetadabhyasūyanto 'nānutiṣṭhanti me matam
sarvajñānavimūḍhāṁstānviddhi naṣṭānacetasaḥ

But those who carp at My teaching and do not follow it, deluded of all knowledge, and deviod of discrimination, know them to be doomed to destruction. 32

Comment:

'Ye tvetadabhyasūyanto nānutiṣṭhanti me matam'— Having shown the advantage of practising His teaching in the thirty-first verse here the term 'Tu' (But) has been used to distinguish those who don't follow His teaching from those who follow his teaching.

Some people hold that as worldly selfish people want to acquire the worldly objects and also want to get profit themselves, similarly the Lord wants all actions to be surrendered to Him and also that He should be regarded as the Lord. Those who think so, carp at His teaching.

Similarly, those who think that in the worldly affairs, desire is a must and it is impossible to renounce attachment, aversion and the feeling of mine, also slight His teaching.

Those people who hanker after worldly pleasures and prosperity and regard the body, objects and actions etc., as theirs and for them, don't follow His teaching.

'Sarvajñānavimūḍhān tān'— Those who do not follow the Lord's teaching are under delusion regarding worldly knowledge (sciences, arts etc.). They remain engrossed in the inventions and scientific discoveries like motor cars, aeroplanes, radios televisions etc. Similarly, they remain engaged in knowing painting, architecture, arts, crafts, mystical formulas, incantations, implements, different scripts and languages, custom traditions and other marvels. They are fully convinced that there is nothing beyond these things (Gītā 16/11). Such people are said to be under delusion regarding all knowledge.

'Acetasaḥ'—They are devoid of discrimination because they can't distinguish the real from the unreal, righteousness from

unrighteousness, salvation from bondage and so on. They remain ignorant like animals. 'Of vain hopes, of vain actions, of vain knowledge and senseless, they verily are' (Gītā 9/12).

'Viddhi naṣṭān'— Know those human beings who don't follow the Lord's teaching to be doomed to destruction. It means that they will go on following the cycle of birth and death.

A man can attain salvation upto the time of death (Gītā 8/5). Therefore, those people, who don't follow the Lord's teaching in this life, can follow it in future because of good company etc., and can attain salvation. But if they don't follow His teaching even upto death they should be known to be doomed to destruction because they are deprived of God-Realization.

He, who does not follow the Lord's teaching, performs actions out of attachment and aversion which are his foes (Gītā 3/34). The transient objects and actions perish but a man while performing actions comes under the sway of attachment and aversion which lead him to lower wombs and hells. Therefore, the Lord declares that such a man will be doomed to destruction.

In the thirty-first verse the Lord declares that those who follow His teachings are released from the bondage of actions while in this verse He declares that those who don't follow His teaching, are to be doomed to destruction. It means that the Lord urges people to follow His teaching even if they don't believe in Him. If they don't follow His teaching, they will be doomed to destruction. But if a striver believing in Him, follows His teaching, He offers Himself to him. If he without believing in Him, follows His teaching, He leads him to salvation. It means that he who believes in Him attains His love while he who follows His teaching attains salvation.

Link:–Why are those people, who don't follow the Lord's teaching, doomed to destruction? The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।
प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥ ३३ ॥

sadṛśaṁ ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛterjñānavānapi
prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati

Even a wise man acts in accordance with his own nature. Beings follow their nature. What can restraint do? 33

Comment:

'Prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni'— All actions are performed either according to one's own nature or according to the Lord's principle (scriptural injunctions). One's nature can be of two kinds — free from attachment and aversion, and having attachment and aversion. A man on his way happens to see a notice board, His casting a glance at it is neither because of attachment nor aversion nor from the angle of principle. This is through his pure personal nature. We read the letter received from a friend with attachment while that of an enemy with aversion. We study the sacred texts such as the Gītā and the Rāmāyaṇa according to the Lord's principle. The only aim of human life is God-Realization. Therefore, the actions which are performed with the aim of God-Realization, are performed according to His principle i.e., according to the scriptural injunctions.

All actions such as seeing, hearing, smelling, touching etc., are performed according to one's nature and according to His principle. The nature free from attachment and aversion is not defective while the nature with attachment and aversion is defective. The actions which are performed out of attachment and aversion

bind a man because they make the nature impure. On the other hand, the actions which are performed according to His principle lead to salvation because they purify the nature. It is because of impure personal nature that the assumed affinity for the world is not renounced. As soon as the nature is purified, the assumed affinity is easily renounced.

Actions are automatically performed by the so-called body of a wise man because he has no sense of doership. All the actions of a striver whose aim is God-Realization, are performed according to the scriptural injunctions. As a greedy person is always careful that he should not sustain any loss, a striver is always careful lest he should perform an activity with attachment or aversion. By being careful, a striver's nature is purified and consequently he is liberated from the bondage of actions.

Although all actions are performed by the modes of nature, yet an ignorant man whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks that he is the doer (Gītā 3/27). Affinity for objects and actions gives birth to attachment and aversion which lead him to the cycle of birth and death. But he who has no affinity for nature (Prakṛti) sees that the self is not the doer (Gītā 13/29).

It is attachment to material objects which inspires a person to perform evil actions. For a striver attachment is the main cause of bondage. Attachment dwells in assumed egoism and appears in mind, intellect, senses and sense-objects.

Egoism is of two kinds–

1–When a man (Soul) identifies the self with the insentient (Matter).

2–The cosmic ego, the mode of Nature—'Mahābhūtānyahaṁkāraḥ' (Gītā 13/5). The latter sort of egoism is flawless as it is an instrument like the mind, intellect and senses etc., while the former kind is defective. A wise man does not identify the self with the body and so all his actions are performed by the modes of nature i.e., by the latter kind. But an ignorant man who regards the body as 'I' and 'mine' and the actions as his and for him, is bound because the assumption of the actions as his and for him, causes attachment*.

'Sadṛśaṁ ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛterjñānavānapi'— A perfect soul being free from attachment and aversion acts in accordance with his pure nature. He is not swayed by Nature. As a learned man speaks the language which he knows, similarly the Lord also behaves in accordance with His incarnation as Rāma or Kṛṣṇa or the fish, the tortoise or the hog etc., but does not remain completely under the sway of nature (Prakṛti). Similarly, those enlightened souls who have renounced their affinity for Matter (Prakṛti) may vary in their nature but are not swayed by it. So their actions are nothing more than gestures of action while common men, who have not renounced their affinity for Matter act according to individual nature (natural propensities) and remain completely under its sway.

Here the term 'Svasyāḥ' means that the nature of a wise man is flawless and so he is not under the sway of nature, he rather controls nature. Actions bear fruits only when a man performs them with the sense of 'doership' and selfishness. A wise man remains free from the pride of doership and also from selfishness. So the actions performed by him are pure and also ideal for other strivers.

Impression of the past and the present births, influence of parents, society, company, education, environment, study, adoration, thoughts, actions and feelings make a man's nature. The nature varies from person to person and every one is free in making it pure. The nature of one enlightened soul varies from that of the other but it is pure (free from attachment and aversion). So he is not swayed by nature. On the other hand the ignorant (having attachment and aversion) have to perform actions forcibly according to their own evil nature which they themselves have formed.

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* As the body automatically develops and changes, similarly all the actions are naturally performed. But a common man remains engrossed in (practical) actions because of attachment and aversion while a wise man being free from attachment and aversion does not get engrossed in them.

'Nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati'—The wise men perform virtuous actions enjoyed by the scriptures according to their pure nature while the ignorant perform evil actions under the sway of their evil nature.

When Arjuna wants to abstain from fighting, the Lord says to him, "Thy nature will compel thee" (Gītā 18/59), "Thou shalt do even against thy will, fettered by thine own acts born of thy nature" (18/60).

As a motor car can't cross the limit of its speed, a wise man can't act against his pure nature. One with an impure nature is just like a damaged car. A damaged car can be repaired in two ways – (i) by the driver himself (ii) by sending it to the workshop. Similarly the impure nature can be purified in two ways – (i) Through the performance of actions without attachment and aversion (Gītā 3/34) (ii) Through perfect surrender to the Lord (Gītā 18/62). If the motor car functions smoothly, it means that we are not under its sway but if it is damaged, it means that we are under its sway. Similarly a wise man because of his pure nature is not under the sway of nature while an ignorant man because of his impure nature has to act under the sway of nature.

The man, who attaches importance to worldly pleasures and prosperity, is sure to have a downfall even though he may be learned. On the other hand he who does not attach importance to the insentient (Matter) (prosperity and pleasure) and whose aim is God-Realization, is surely to have an uplift even though he is not learned. The reason is that the feelings, thoughts and actions of the man, whose aim instead of enjoying the worldly pleasures and prosperity, is God-Realization, are conducive to his uplift (salvation). Therefore, a striver first of all should decide the goal of his life — God-Realization. Then in order to attain that aim he should perform his duty being free from attachment and aversion. An easy method of being free from attachment and aversion is that we should render service to others, with the acquired material such as body etc., without regarding them as ours and for us, without expectation of any reward.

If a striver does not want to come under the sway of nature, he should perform his duty by fixing an ideal before him. The ideal (model) can be of two kinds — (i) The Lord's teaching (ii) Wise men's actions. By following the Lord's teaching or wise men's actions, the striver's nature is purified and he realizes God Who is ever attained. On the other hand the man, who without following the Lord's teaching or the wise men's actions, performs actions out of attachment and aversion, is doomed to destruction (Gītā 3/32).

As we cannot forcibly obstruct the course of a river, but can turn it to the other direction, similarly, we can turn the flow of our actions towards the welfare of others. When we perform them for the welfare of others, their flow is towards the world and we, the strivers are liberated from the bondage of actions.

Link:–Every man is born with his own nature. Therefore, he has to act according to his nature. Now the Lord in the next verse explains how to purify one's nature.

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।
तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ।। ३४ ।।

indriyasyendriyasyārthe rāgadveṣau vyavasthitau
tayorna vaśamāgacchettau hyasya paripanthinau

Attachment and aversion for the objects of the senses abide in the senses. Let no one come under their sway, for they are his waylayers (foes). 34

Comment:

'Indriyasyendriyasyārthe rāga-dveṣau vyavasthitau'— Each sense has attraction for its pleasant object (ear, eye, skin, tongue and nose for sound, sight, touch, taste and smell respectively) and aversion for an upleasant object.

In fact attachment and aversion don't abide in the sense-objects. Had they abode in the sense-objects, the same objects might have been pleasant (desirable) or unpleasant (undesirable) equally to every one. But it does not happen. Rain is desirable to a farmer but it is undesirable to a potter. Moreover, the same object is sometimes pleasant while it is unpleasant at other time to the same person. Cool air is pleasant in summer but unpleasant in winter. Thus, we have attraction and aversion for them by regarding them as desirable and undesirable. Therefore, the Lord has declared that attachment and aversion of abide in the sense-objects.

In fact attachment and aversion abide in assumed 'ego'('I'ness)*.The assumed affinity for the body is called 'ego'. So long as there is assumed affinity for the body, attachment and aversion abide in 'ego' and they appear to be abiding in the intellect, mind, senses and objects of senses. These attachment and aversion have been called desire and anger from the thirty-seventh to the forty-third verses of this chapter. In the fortieth verse it has been said that this desire abides in the senses, the mind and the intellect because it appears to abide in them. As attachment and aversion appear to abide in the sense-objects, similarly attachment and aversion appear to abide in senses, mind and intellect. In fact the senses, the mind and the intellect are merely instruments. So there is no question of the desire and anger or attachment and aversion abiding in them. Besides this, the Lord declares in the fifty-ninth verse of he second chapter, "The objects of the senses turn away from the man who abstains from feeding on them but the taste for them remains. Even the taste turns away when the supreme is seen."

'Tayorna vaśamāgacchet'— The Lord assures strivers that they should never be disappointed in the means and ends if attachment and aversion appear. The scriptures rather than attachment and aversion should be the authority for determining what should be done and what should not be done (Gītā 16/24). If a striver acts or abstains from action with attachment and aversion, it means that he is swayed by attachment and aversion. If a person performs actions or abstains from actions with attachment and aversion, attachment and aversion are strengthened. This strengthening leads a man to a downfall.

When a striver starts adoration renouncing the worldly affairs, the good and bad thoughts of the world come to his mind and so he gets perturbed. The Lord urges him not to be perturbed because they are perishable, they appear and disappear. In fact thoughts have no existence of their own because it is a principle that what is born must die. In fact these thoughts don't come to the mind, they rather slip away from the mind. The thoughts remain suppressed when a man is busy with worldly affairs but when he stops the work, the suppressed thoughts have an outlet. Therefore, a striver without having attachment or aversion to them should remain indifferent to them. Similarly he should also have neither attachment nor aversion to persons and things etc.

The Means of Overcoming Attachment and Aversion

When actions are performed out of attachment and aversion, attachment and aversion are strengthened and they are transformed to impure nature. This impure nature brings a man under its sway and then the actions performed by him bind

* The term 'Asya' in the expression 'Rasavarjam raso'pyasya' (Gītā 2/59) used by Lord Krsna also denotes that attachment and aversion abide in the assumed 'ego' (in a striver).

him. So during the performance or non-performance of actions a striver should not come under their sway. This is the means to obliterate attachment and aversion which is declared here. Previous to it the Lord also declared another means. The Lord declared, "Those who constantly follow this teaching of Mine, are released from bondage of actions" (Gītā 3/31). So a striver should follow His teaching so that he may get rid of attachment and aversion. When a striver surrenders his actions, body, senses, mind, intellect and himself to God and performs his duty being free from desire, egoism and grief, his attachment and aversion perish. So a person should follow His teaching while he performs actions or abstains himself from actions.

The entire universe is an evolute of nature and the body is a fragment of the universe. So long as a man is attached to the body, he comes under the sway of attachment and aversion while acquiring and abandoning things etc. When actions are performed or abandoned with attachment and aversion, their performance or non-performance strengthens attachment and aversion. But if they are either performed or abandoned according to the scriptural injunctions, attachment and aversion perish. If a person does not know the ordinance of the scriptures, he should keep in mind great sage Veda Vyāsa's teaching — O men, listen to the gist of righteousness and follow it. The gist is — We should not do to others what we don't wish to be done to us (Padma Purāṇa, Sṛṣṭi. 19/355-56).

The liberated souls always follow the scriptural injunctions. That is why Bhīṣma Pitāmaha offered food and water to the manes on kuśā grass though his father's hand was clearly visible to him (Mahābhārata, Anuśāsana. 84/15-20). Therefore, a striver should perform all actions according to the ordinance of the scriptures.

For a striver who wants to get rid of attachment and aversion, the scripture is the authority for determining what should be done. The heart of an enlightened soul, who is totally free from attachment and aversion, is so pure that his thoughts, feelings and actions are nothing but the ordinances of the scriptures* even if he may be illiterate. Thus his words and actions are exemplary (Gītā 3/21) and by following his teaching and actions, strivers get rid of attachment and aversion.

Some people hold that attachment and aversion are permanent Dharmas (righteous inclinations of the mind) which cannot be wiped out. But it is wrong. They appear and disappear. When a striver practises spiritual discipline, they grow thinner — this is every striver's experience; and whatever grows thinner, may perish altogether. The Lord has declared that they come to the mind (Gītā 2/55) but don't abide there permanently. Moreover, He has called them modifications (Gītā 13/6) which have a beginning and an end rather than 'Dharmas' while evenness of mind in the desirable and the undesirable has been called spiritual discipline (Gītā 13/9). Had attachment and aversion been permanent features of the mind, the mind would have not attained the state of evenness. It means that they come to the mind and can be wiped out.

A man through discrimination knows that nature (Matter) and Soul (spirit) are different from each other. But the soul identifies Itself with the body (born of nature) and this identification is called 'Ego' (I) in which attachment and aversion abide and attachment and aversion strengthen egoism. These — attachment and aversion seem to abide in intellect because of which one's own beliefs seem pleasant while the beliefs of others seem unpleasant. Then they seem to abide in the mind by which what he thinks seems desirable while what others think seems undesirable. Then they seem to abide in senses due to which the favourable objects seem pleasant while the unfavourable

* The heart of the person who never renounces righteousness also becomes pure. Great poet Kālidāsa while describing king Duṣyanta declares—"Where there is doubt, there the inclination of the heart of a virtuous person is the testimony" (Abhijñānaśākuntalam 1/21).

objects seem unpleasant. After that they appear in the objects of senses (sound, touch, sight, taste, smell) as favourable and unfavourable. When egoism (identification of the self with the body) is rooted out, attachment and aversion totally perish because egoism is their base.

'I am a servant' 'I am an inquisitive learner' 'I am a devotee' etc., this is how one may feel. These—'Servant', 'learner' and 'devotee' reside in the same 'I' in which attachment and aversion co-exist. The attachment and aversion abide neither in inert only nor in conscious only. They live only in assumed relation between inert and conscious, yet they live mainly in the inert. In the state of identification of soul with the matter, the material part is attracted towards matter alone but it appears in the conscious soul due to this identification. Attraction for the insentient (Matter) is attachment. When a striver identifies the self with the body, he feels difficulty in renouncing attachment and aversion. But when he has an eye on the Self, he has no difficulty in renouncing attachment and aversion because they have no existence of their own, they are born only when he identifies the self with the body etc.

If a striver has attachment to good company, adoration and meditation etc., he has aversion to the world. But if he has 'love' (devotion) for God, he will have no aversion to the world but he will be indifferent to the world.*

If a man has attachment for one object, he has aversion for the other one but when he has love (devotion) for God, he develops dispassion. Dispassion leads to selfless service by wiping out the desire to derive pleasure. Then the body, senses, mind, intellect and ego are automatically engaged in the service of the world. Consequently, attachment and aversion which abide in ego totally perish when the affinity of the self for the body etc., along with ego is renounced.

All the actions of a man are performed according to his nature or according to the scriptural injunctions. If something is done with the view of spiritual progress only, it is done as obedience to the principle. Nature can be pure (free from attachment and aversion) and impure (with attachment and aversion). Nature cannot be totally renounced but it can be purified i.e., made free from attachment and aversion. As the course of the Ganges can't be forcibly obstructed but its direction can be changed, similarly, actions can't be totally renounced but their flow (course) can be changed i.e., can be made free from attachment and aversion — this is a vital principle (teaching) of the Gītā. It is neither the performance nor non-performance of actions but attachment and aversion which are the stumbling blocks to a striver's spiritual progress. So the Lord declares that a wise man is he who has neither attachment to agreeable actions nor aversion to disagreeable ones (Gītā 18/10). Generally strivers are not on their guard against attachment and aversion. Their activities are done under their sway. Therefore, a striver should perform actions according to the scriptural ordinance in order to be free from attachment and aversion. By doing so his nature will be automatically purified.

When a desire mixed with attraction or aversion, is born and if we act according to its dictates, the attraction and aversion get strengthened and if we act according to the principles they get wiped out.

When good and evil thoughts come to the mind of a striver, he should neither have attachment nor aversion to them, he should neither support them nor oppose them. He should remain indifferent to them by thinking that he (the self) is different from them and so the self has no affinity for them.

If a striver finds himself helpless in renouncing attachment and aversion, he

* Whether a striver has attachment or love (devotion) to holy company can be illustrated by the following example:– If anybody creates an obstacle to a striver's good company, adoration or meditation and he gets angry with him, it means that he has attachment. But if he feels sad, it means that he has love. The reason is that there are obstacles to the spiritual discipline when his determination is not firm. So he is sad because of his shortcoming. Similarly, if he is biased against any religion or sect, it means that he is attached to his own religion or sect.

In fact even attachment to the good company, adoration and meditation is not bad because this spiritual practice leads the mind to the thought of God (Śrīmadbhā. 7/1/31).

should take refuge in the omnipotent Lord Who is his most disinterested friend. By His grace he overcomes attachment and aversion (Gītā 7/14) and attains supreme peace (Gītā 18/62). The assumption that the body, senses, mind, intellect, ego and all the worldly objects belong to the Lord is taking refuge in Him. So a striver should serve His subjects in order to please Him with the materials provided by Him, without expecting any reward. Expectation of the reward leads to affinity for the insentient (Matter).

'Service to others without expecting any reward' is a panacea to wipe out attachment and aversion. All our possessions including the physical, subtle and causal bodies as well as egoism are to render service to the world, because they are essentially the same as is the world. The assumption that they are different from the world leads to bondage. A striver should not derive pleasure out of things and actions with the physical body, out of thinking with the subtle body and out of trance with the causal body. In fact this human body is not for pleasures (Mānasa 7/44/1).

Secondly the body, senses, mind, intellect and objects etc., with which service is rendered, are the fragments of the world. How can the fragments of the world be ours when the world is not ours? We can't render service to others with them in a disinterested way if we regard them as ours. Therefore, we should regard them as of those whose service is rendered with them. A devotee surrenders them to God by regarding them as His. Similarly a Karmayogī surrenders them to the world by regarding them as the world's.

A Vital Fact Pertaining to Service

He alone can render true service to others who never requires anything for himself. The desire for money in lieu of service is no doubt a desire buf an inclination to serve is also a desire because it results in a desire for riches. A striver should not have a desire to acquire money even for rendering service to others. If he gets an opportunity, he should render service according to his resources but he should have no desire to render service. He who derives pleasure by rendering service to others or has the sentiment that people are benefited by him or expects honour and praise, or gets pleased by receiving honour and praise, in fact enjoys pleasures instead of rendering true service. If a striver derives pleasure out of it, it gives birth to attachment and desire. In fact the objects with which he renders service to others, belong to them. So there is no obligation if their trust property is handed over to them. Does anyone want any reward having washed his face with his hands?

Question:— How can service be rendered without objects and money etc ?. So what is the harm if anyone desires money and objects in order to render service to others?

Answer:—Service with material objects is a gross type of service. Real service is a motive, not an action. Action leads to bondage while service releases from bondage. The sense of service impels a man to use his possessions in the service of others. Real service is rendered through feelings rather than through actions. A man of generous feeling can render service with the limited resources he has. He who attaches importance to objects, can't render service with them because he has pride in doing so, and thus he derives pleasure out of his action whether he knows it or not. A shopkeeper gives articles to others but he does not render service because he has a desire to receive money in exchange. Similarly, the money which is paid as tax to the king (state) can't be called charity. If a person offers charity or food or water to some one in order to reap its fruit, his affinity for the object is not renounced. But if he offers the articles without expecting any reward, it means that he renders service and his affinity for those objects is renounced.

Only he, who lays claim to a thing i.e., who is the real owner of a thing, can receive the thing given by us. We get out of debt by offering his thing back to him. He who is in a greater need of something actually is a deserving hand to receive it. He takes it from us only if it is his, otherwise not.

He who renders service to others from his heart arouses feelings of service in their hearts also. If this feeling is not aroused in their hearts, it means that there has been a flaw (such as of reaping the fruit) in it. A striver should be on the alert in this respect. While rendering service he should never expect to the called virtuous or good because this feeling develops pride in him.

A striver should live in the world in order to render service to others by performing his duty. He should never cause any harm to anyone in the least. He should share the joys and sorrows of others because it gives them moral strength that there is someone who is sharing their joys and sorrows. In this way happy men will become happier and the sad will be consoled. He should console the sad by quoting Lord Rāma, king Nala and king Hariścandra etc., who had to face adverse situations though they were very noble and virtuous. Moreover, there are many who are in a more pitiable condition than they. Thus he should try to console them, be prepared to help them and remain engaged in their welfare by having good feelings. Those who share the pleasures and pains of others are saints (Mānasa 7/38/1).

Now a doubt may arise that we shall never be free from sorrows, if we share the sorrows of other people because the world is full of sorrows. To share the sorrows of others means to have the feeling to alleviate their sufferings and to make efforts for it. This will give us happiness rather than make us sad. The clarification is that other people will also share our sorrows i.e., they will try to help us in doing away with our sorrows. So we should try to share the sorrows of others from our heart according to our resources. When we share their sorrows, all our resources are automatically utilized to relieve them of their sorrows and sufferings. It is beyond our power to make others happy but it is upto us to use our resources in order to help the sad in removing their sorrows. This renunciation of the means of happiness will bring us peace of mind.

A striver should always have the feeling that no one should ever suffer in the least. Every one is free in having such sort of generous feeling. This feeling is an automatic service. Actions and objects are limited while the feeling of generosity is unlimited. So a striver can attain the unlimited Lord by the unlimited feeling. How can He be attained by the limited resources such as actions and objects? Therefore, those whose possessions and resources are limited can also render a great service by having generous feelings.

The striver who does not regard the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., as his, can share the joys and sorrows of others. In fact the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., are neither his nor for him. Similar is the case with objects, resources and persons. They are also not his personal property. Every one whether he is rich or poor, educated or uneducated can renounce this assumed affinity for them. As soon as this assumed affinity is renounced and he renders service to others by those things regarding them as their own, he gets rid of attachment and aversion easily.

'Tau hyasya paripanthinau'— In the spiritual discipline attachment and aversion are the waylayers to rob a striver of his spiritual property. But a striver does not pay heed to this fact. Therefore, he does not progress in the spiritual field as much as he should have progressed. Generally strivers have a complaint that they can't concentrate their minds on God. But this lack of concentration is not such a stumbling block as are attachment and aversion. When attachment and aversions are renounced, mind can also be easily concentrated.

Total renunciation of actions pertaining to one's nature is beyond a striver's power but their performance without attachment and aversion is within his power. So the Lord urges strivers not to come under their sway for they are his waylayers. In fact attachment and aversion are naturally perishing. But a striver by holding that they dwell in him accepts their existence and then acts by coming under their sway. So he does not get rid of them. If he holds that they don't dwell in him and so he does not act being swayed by them, they will automatically perish.

Link:–When we rise above attachment and aversion what should we do and what should we refrain from doing? The Lord answers this question in the verse that follows:–

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात्।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥ ३५ ॥

śreyānsvadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharmātsvanuṣṭhitāt
svadharme nidhanaṁ śreyaḥ paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ

Better is one's own duty, though devoid of merit, than the duty of another well discharged. Better is death in one's own duty; the duty of another is fraught with fear (is dangerous). 35

Comment:

'Śreyān* svadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharmātsvanuṣṭhitāt'—The duty of another according to his caste, order of life, etc., may outwardly seem full of merits, may be easy to perform, may be attractive, may provide riches, comforts, honour and praise etc., may enable one to live with comforts through out his life yet being forbidden for him, is fraught with fear (pain). On the other hand, one's own duty according to one's caste and order of life may be devoid of merit, may be difficult to perform may not be appealing and may not provide riches, comforts, honour and praise etc., and may be painful, throughout the life yet it should be performed with out expecting any reward because it leads to salvation. Therefore, a person should always perform his duty without expecting any reward, without the sense of 'mine' and without attachment.

Performance of duty for a man is natural and innate. A man is born according to his actions, and actions are decided by his birth (Gītā 18/41). Through the performance of his own duty he attains perfection (Gītā 18/45). Therefore, one should not give up one's duty ordained by one's nature even if it seems to be tained with blemish (Gītā 18/48).

Arjuna thinks it better to live in this world by begging than to fight (Gītā 2/5). So the Lord makes it clear to Arjuna that begging being the duty of a beggar is not his duty because he is a Kṣatriya (a member of the warrior class), not a beggar. In the first chapter when Arjuna said that only sin would accrue to them by fighting (1/36), the Lord said that having abandoned his own duty and forfeited his fame he would incur sin (2/33). Further the Lord declared "Treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, engage thou in battle; thus thou shall not incur sin" (2/38). In the eighteenth chapter also He declares, "Better is one's own duty though devoid of merits, than the duty of another well performed and he who performs his duty ordained by one's own nature incurs no sin" (18/47). It means that a man incurs sin only when duty is performed with attachment and aversion. When a striver performs his duty scrupulously being free from attachment and aversion, he realizes equanimity which leads him to freedom from sorrow and pain (Gītā 6/23). So the Lord urges Arjuna time and again to perform his duty of fighting wihout attachment and aversion. By performing his duty he will be detached from actions, develop dispassion and attain the goal of life. Through the selfless performance of duty, actions flow towards nature (Prakṛti) and so a striver has no affinity for them. Therefore a striver should perform his duty with the view to root out attachment for actions.

Lord Kṛṣṇa as if convinces Arjuna that taking birth in warrior class, fighting is his own duty so he had to treat alike the victory and defeat, gain and loss, and pleasure and pain; holding that he had no concern with war, he had to do action in order only, to remove attachment with the actions. The body, senses, mind, intellect and matter etc., are meant for performing duty alone.

One's duty according to one's caste and order of life, even though may appear devoid of merits, leads to salvation. A Kṣatriya's duty of fighting, which involves violence may seem forgiveness etc., of a Brāhmaṇa (member to be devoid of the merits of the duties such as serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity and of the priest class), yet a

* The term 'Jyāyasī' (Superior) (3/1) used in the question put by Arjuna and the term 'Śreyān' are synonymous. It means that he Lord has answered Arjuna's question in this verse with particular attention.

Kṣatriya (member of the warrior class) should fight as it will lead him to salvation.

According to one's caste and order of life etc., outwardly actions (duties) may seem terrible or mild but they are performed with the only aim of God-Realization. When a person forgets the real aim of life i.e., God-Realization and attaches importance to the worldly objects, the actions seem terrible or mild to him. Under no circumstances one, should discard his duty.

'Svadharme nidhanaṁ śreyaḥ'— If people ever gained comforts, pleasures, property, riches, honour and praise etc., by performing their duty, there might be seen a crowd of righteous people. But duty is not performed keeping in view pleasure or pain but it is performed according to the teaching of the Lord or the scriptures without expecting any reward. So while performing his duty if a striver suffers pain, that pain leads him to his spiritual progress. In fact that pain is not pain but that is penance or austerity which is conducive to progress because penance is performed for his own self while duty is performed for others. The penance which is performed intentionally does not prove so beneficial as is the penance in the form of pain which comes uninvited. Those who died while performing their duty have become immortal. From the worldly point of view also, it is observed that those who don't deviate from their duty in spite of suffering pain are admired and honoured. The patriots who suffered tortures, went to jail and were hanged in order to make the country independent are praised and honoured even today. On the other hand, those who are sent to jail because of their crimes are condemned and dishonoured. It means that the person who performs his duty without expecting any reward may suffer pain and even may meet with death but that pain wins honour and praise here and leads him to salvation hereafter because he has an eye on righteousness.

Question:—How to know for certain that death while performing one's own duty leads only to salvation?

Answer:—The Gītā is a gospel of Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. So there should not arise any doubt about His teaching. Secondly, this is a topic of faith and belief rather than reasoning, yet certain points are there which may clarify the doubt.

(1)—Whatever is not known to us should be decided by the scriptures*. It is mentioned in the scriptures that he who protects righteousness, is protected by righteousness (Manusmṛti 8/15) i.e., righteousness leads him to salvation. Therefore, the responsibility of salvation of the person who follows righteousness goes to righteousness and the preachers of righteousness such as God, the Vedas and the scriptures and the sages and asceties. It is their power which leads him to salvation. In the scriptures it is mentioned that a chaste woman attains salvation. She does not attain salvation because of the virtues of her husband and his power but because of the power of the Lord, the Vedas and the scriptures etc., that have made this law (ordinance). There is no doubt about it.

(2)—The history also reveals the fact that he who performs his duty with righteousness attains salvation. King Hariścandra did not deviate from truth in the face of adversity insult and dishonour. Consequently, he along with his subjects attained the Supreme Abode (Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, Devībhāgavata etc.)

(3)—Nowadays we come across many incidents of rebirth which reveal that creatures go to higher or lower wombs according to their good or bad deeds.†

(4)—Not to speak of a believer, even a non-believer by performing his duty scrupulously without any selfish motive gains peace or joy which is a characteristic of the mode of goodness. This peace is a mark of salvation or the supreme Peace. Therefore, our own experience proves that performance of one's duty discarding forbidden actions leads to salvation.

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* The scripture which removes doubts and reveals secrets gives us all the light of knowledge. Therefore, he who has no knowledge of the scriptures is blind.

† 'Kalyāna monthly magazine– 43rd year (1968)-Special Issue – 'Paraloka Aura Punarjanmāṅka' (Special Issue – pertaining the Next-World and the Next-Birth).

A Vital Fact

It is the real duty of a man (the self) being a fragment of the Lord to attain salvation and to hold that he is only the Lord's and only the Lord is his. Even the duty according to one's caste, stage of life and body etc., are not real duties because they are assumed, they are not of the self. In all of them a man has to depend on others while in one's own real duty he is totally independent, without the least dependence on anyone. Therefore, a striver himself may either be a lover or a seeker of knowledge or a devotee, he has not to depend on anyone else. A lover, transmuted into love becomes one with the Beloved; a seeker of knowledge, transmuted into knowledge becomes one with Him Who is all Knowledge, and a (servant) transmuted into service becomes one with the Master. Similarly a striver transmuted into 'Sādhanā' (Spiritual discipline) becomes one with God.

A striver having the aim of God-Realization does not hanker after riches, honour, praise, comforts and luxuries. He is not at all worried about them, nor is pleased having acquired them because his aim is only God-Realization rather than acquisition of riches, honour and praise etc. So all the worldly actions are performed scrupulously and solemnly for the Lord's sake by him. As a businessman takes a lot of pain in order to earn more and more money, and as a patient undergoes an operation happily in order to recover from a disease; a striver remains pleased and satisfied even in defeat, loss and pain in order to attain his aim of God-Realization. For him the desirable and the undesirable circumstances are the materials to practise spiritual discipline.

When a striver having resolved to realize God starts performing his duty scrupulously, he does not deviate from the performance of his duty even in the face of adversity. He faces that adversity happily taking it to be penance.

When a striver assumes the body as 'I' and 'mine' it gives way to attachment and aversion. While coming under the sway of attachment and aversion a man strays away from his duty. Had the body been 'I' (the self), the body would have remained with the self or the self would have been destroyed with the destruction of the body. But it is not so. Similarly, if the body had been mine, nothing would have remained to be acquired after acquiring it. But the desire to acquire more remains. It means that the real thing has not yet been acquired and the acquired things such as the body etc., are not mine. How can the body be mine when I have neither brought it with me, nor can carry it with me, nor can change it as I desire? Thus every striver knows that the body is neither 'he' nor 'his'. But the strivers don't attach importance to this knowledge, so they can't get rid of attachment and aversion. If a striver sometimes happens to feel the body as 'I' and 'mine', he should instead of attaching importance to this feeling should attach importance to his knowledge. By attaching importance to this knowledge he realizes the self and then he gets rid of attachment and aversion. Being free from attachment, the knowledge of what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, is naturally revealed in his mind and accordingly actions are performed.

'Paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ'— Though the performance of the duty of another appears easy, yet it is fraught with fear i.e., its consequence is disastrous. Having discarded selfish motive if a man performs his duty for the good of others, there is no fear for him from any quarters.

Question:— Having described the duties of Brāhmaṇas (priest class), Kṣatriyas (warrior class), Vaiśyas (trader class) and Śūdras (labour class) in the forty-second, forty- third and forty-fourth verses respectively, the Lord in the first half of the forty-seventh verse declared "Better is one's own duty destitute of merit than the duty of another well performed." According to the present verse the duty of another is said to be

fraugnt with fear. Therefore, the duty of a Brāhmaṇa should be disastrous for others such as the Kṣatriya etc. But all people have been advised to perform it in the scriptures. Why?

Answer:— Control of the mind and senses etc., (Gītā 13/7-11; 16/1-3) are common duties which should be performed by every one. These are natural duties for a Brāhmaṇa. So he can perform them easily while the people of other castes may not perform them so easily. Besides the common duties when a man performs his duties born of his nature, he does not incur sin, though it may appear that he incurs sin. For example if a Kṣatriya fights valiantly without selfishness and malice by regarding it as his duty he incurs no sin. The Lord declares,"He who performs his duty ordained according to his own nature incurs no sin' (18/47).

Besides one's own duty the duty of another is fraught with fear because it is prohibited by the scriptures, it will deprive other persons of their rightful means of livelihood and it will lead him to hells. Therefore, the Lord asks Arjuna to perform his duty of fighting which is better than begging. Begging, being prohibited for Arjuna, being a Kṣatriya is not beneficial for him.

A Vital Fact Pertaining to One's Own Duty & the Duty of Another

Nature (Prakṛti) and its evolute (body and world) are different from God and the self (Soul). Duty of the Self is one's own duty while the duty of Nature, the body and the world is the duty of another. Absence of modification, flawlessness, imperishability, eternity, desirelessness and non-attachment are the duties of the self while modifications, flaws, transitoriness, mortality and desires for pleasures, prosperity, honour and praise etc., are the duties of the body and the world and therefore, are the duties of another. The duty of the self is imperishable because the self is imperishable while the duty of the body is perishable because the body ever undergoes modifications.

Renunciation (the Discipline of Action), knowledge (the Discipline of Knowledge) and love (the Discipline of Devotion) being axiomatic are one's own duty. They need no practice as practice is done by the body and what ever has affinity for the body is the duty of another.

To be united with God is one's own duty while to be a pleasure seeker is the duty of another; to remain detached is one's duty, while to be attached is the duty of another; to render service is one's own duty while to have any desire is the duty of another; to be a lover is one's own duty while to be passionate is the duty of another. It means that whatever is connected with the self is one's own duty while whatever is connected with Nature (Prakṛti) is the duty of another. One's own duty is sentient while the duty of another is insentient.

The self is a fragment of God while the body is a fragment of Nature (Prakṛti). The desire for Self-Realization and God-Realization, is the duty of the self because the self is a fragment of God while the desire for pleasure and prosperity is the duty of another (Paradharma). This desire for pleasure and prosperity is aroused by accepting affinity for the unreal body. A desire for one's ultimate good is one's duty because being a fragment of God one's own desire is the desire of God Himself and not that of the world.

A man is independent in performing his own duty of God-Realization or Self-Realization or salvation because in it there is no need of the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., but there is need to severe connection with them. But in performing the duty for another a man is dependent because it needs the body, senses, mind, intellect, things and persons etc.

When a man practises spiritual discipline in order to realize God without accepting his affinity for the body, his practice is his own duty. All the means followed in order to attain Self-Realization or God-Realization are included in one's own duty (Svadharma) while all the actions done for the world are included in the duty for another

(Paradharma). Thus practising the three Disciplines (Action, Knowledge and Devotion) is a man's own duty while hankering after worldly pleasures and prosperity having accepted the affinity for the body is the duty of another.

All the virtuous actions such as pilgrimage, fast, penance, meditation and trance etc., performed with physical, subtle and causal bodies with the expectation of reward i.e., with a selfish motive turn to be 'Para- dharma' (the duty of another). But if they are performed for the welfare of others without expecting any reward, they become 'Svadharma' (one's own duty). The reason is that the self is desireless while desire is born by having affinity for Nature (Prakṛti). So when a man having desire, performs his duty, it becomes the duty of another. One's own duty leads to salvation while the duty of another leads to bondage.

Every man having a disinclination for the duty of others should perform his own duty of God-Realization or Self-Realization for which this human body has been bestowed upon him. As far as the performance of the duty of another is concerned, it can be performed in other lower births and also heaven etc., where the only aim is the enjoyment of pleasures. A man is independent in and capable of performing his own duty while he is dependent in and incapable of performing the duty of another. He is sad when he has a desire to acquire worldly objects and depends on them having acquired them. This dependence is 'Para- dharma' (the duty of another). But when there is no desire there is no question of any shortage or dependence. That is 'Svadharma' (one's own duty). While performing one's own duty a man may have to undergo a lot of suffering and adversity and even may lose his life, but it will lead him to salvation (God-Realization), while the duty of another even though full of merit and easy to perform, is fraught with fear i.e., leads him to the cycle of birth and death.

All the pains, sorrows and worries etc., of the world are born by the performance of the duty of another while the performance of one's own duty leads to the eternal bliss.

Link:—Why does a man not perform his own duty when he knows that one's own duty is better, though devoid of merit than the duty of another well discharged ? At this Arjuna puts the question in the verse that follows.

अर्जुन उवाच

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।
अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥ ३६ ॥

arjuna uvāca

atha kena prayukto'yaṁ pāpaṁ carati pūruṣaḥ
anicchannapi vārṣṇeya balādiva niyojitaḥ

Arjuna said:

But by what is a man impelled to commit sin, as if by force, even against his will, O Vārṣṇeya (Kṛṣṇa) ? 36

Comment:

'Atha kena prayukto'yaṁ pāpaṁ carati pūruṣaḥ anicchannapi vārṣṇeya balādiva niyojitaḥ'—Lord Kṛṣṇa has been addressed as 'Vārṣṇeya' because he belonged to the Vṛṣṇi clan. In the preceding verse Lord Kṛṣṇa praised the performance of one's duty, and duty is performed according to one's caste and clan. So Arjuna addresses the Lord as Vārṣṇeya. A sensible man does not want to commit sin by thinking of its bitter and sad fruit.

Here the term 'Anicchan' doesn't mean discarding desire for pleasure and prosperity.

It rather stands for the renunciation of the desire to commit sin. A sensible man does not want to commit sin but it is the desire for pleasure and prosperity which deviates him from the performance of his duty and forces him to perform sinful acts.

The expression 'Balādiva niyojitaḥ' (As if driven by force) has been used to point out the fact that a sensible man by knowing the bitter fruit of a sinful act does not want to commit it, yet he is forcibly driven to it. From this it appears that some force is there to compel him to commit sins.

The root of this sin is desire for worldly pleasures and prosperity. But a man does not give any heed to this desire and so he is unable to know the root of evils (sins). He understands that he wants to abstain from committing sins but some entity is forcibly engaging him in sins. Duryodhana also declares:–

"I know what is righteousness but I am not inclined to it; I also know what is unrighteousness but I can't get rid of it. There is some 'Deva' (Force) in my heart which drives me to act." (Garga Saṁhitā, Aśvamedha. 50/36).

The term 'Deva' used by Duryodhana stands for desire (for pleasure and prosperity) which forces him to commit sin and not to follow righteousness.

The expression 'Kena prayukto' yaṁ pāpaṁ carati' — also shows that he is impelled to commit sin by some other force.

The Lord in the thirty-fourth verse said, "Attachment and aversion (which are the subtle forms of desire and anger) are the foes of a striver (i.e., they are the roots of sins)". As it was said in a general way Arjuna could not understand this point. So he puts this question. Arjuna means to ask whether it is lack of faith or carping spirit or villainous nature or clouded under standing or force of one's own nature or attachment and aversion or disinclination for one's own duty and inclination to the duty of another (described from the thirty-first verse to the thirty-fifth verse) which drives a man to commit sin. Besides them is it God or fortune or time or circumstance or action or bad company or society or custom or any government law etc., which is impelling him to commit sin?

Link:–The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥ ३७ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca
kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajoguṇasamudbhavaḥ
mahāśano mahāpāpmā viddhyenamiha vairiṇam

The Blessed Lord said:

It is desire, it is wrath, born of the mode of passion, all devouring and most sinful. Know this to be the enemy here.

Comment:

'Rajoguṇasamudbhavaḥ'—The Lord in the seventh verse of the fourteenth chapter declares, "The mode of passion springs from desire and attachment", while here He declares that desire is born of the mode of passion. It means that desire is born of the mode of passion while desire enhances passion (attachment). A person holds that the worldly objects provide him pleasure. So he has a desire to acquire them in order to enjoy pleasures. This desire gives birth to attachment. So long as this process continues, he can't get rid of sinful acts.

'Kāma* eṣa krodha eṣa'— A man has a desire for sensual pleasures and prosperity. Sometimes sins are committed under the sway of desire while sometimes they are committed under the sway of anger. Through desire and anger different types of sins are committed. Therefore the two terms have been used. This desire is the root of all sins†. When desire is not satisfied it gives birth to anger. The singular number has been used for the desire in order to explain that only desire is the root of sins.

When a desire is satisfied, it gives birth to greed; but if it is not satisfied, it gives birth to wrath. If the person who is the stumbling block to the satisfaction of our desire is more powerful than we, fear is born. Therefore, in the Gītā besides desire and wrath, fear has also been mentioned as 'Delivered from desire, fear and anger' (4/10) and 'free from desire, fear and anger' (5/28).

An Important Fact Pertaining to Desire

Whatever we desire, does not happen and whatever we don't desire, happens—this is suffering. Desire is the root of all sins and sufferings. A man with a desire can't get happiness even in dream (Mānasa 7/90/1). If desire is renounced, there is no question of any suffering.

Craving for the perishable objects is called desire while the need for God-Realization which may appear to be like desire is not really a desire. The reason is that the desire is never satisfied but it is strengthened by sense enjoyments while the need of God- Realization is fulfilled having realized God. A man has desire for something which is different from him (the self) while God is one with the self. Similarly the need of rendering selfless service (the Discipline of Action), Self-Realization (the Discipline of Knowledge) and devotion to God (the Discipline of Devotion) are not desires. In fact the need of the self(soul) is to realize God but he (the self) has a desire to acquire the perishable objects etc., because his discrimination is veiled.

A doubt may arise how the worldly affairs will go on without a desire. The clarification is that the worldly affairs go on with actions and commodities; rather than with desires. Actions are performed outwardly and so their fruit in the form of objects and circumstances etc., is also outwardly while the desire is inward.

Nothing in the world can be acquired by having a desire. It is the fruit of efforts. People have a desire to become rich, yet they remain poor. All the people, except the liberated souls, have a desire to live alive but they die. A man's actions bear fruits according to his fate or fortune, not because of his desire. Whatever is lotted can't be blotted, whether you have a desire for it or not. As a man has to undergo unfavourable circumstances unwillingly, he will also undergo favourable circumstances. A man has to bear pain, blame and dishonour etc., without any desire. Similarly, he will gain pleasure, praise and honour without desire as a result of his fate.

A man may have a desire for the immediate pleasures and prosperity or for future fruits for his actions. But a desire is the root of pain here as well as hereafter. So a man should renounce desire..

It is out of desire that a man performs actions. When there is an excess of this desire, it forces him to perform forbidden actions. It is because of desire that he is more attached to the unreal. As soon as he renounces the desire, his affinity for the unreal is renounced.

When a desire is satisfied we attain the same state in which we were before the desire was aroused. When this desire, say of receiving a hundred rupees was not aroused in a striver's mind, he was desireless

* 'I should get this, I should get this'—this is desire. Such a desire is known as 'Kāma'.

† Though disinclination for God and not attaching importance to discrimination are also the cause of sins, yet here desire has been said to be the root of sins because here in this chapter of the Discipline of Action, the aim of a striver is to get rid of desire.

and again having received that amount he becomes desireless. But it is because of his attachment to the worldly pleasures that new desires are born. Thus desires are never satisfied.

Some people hold that desires can't be totally renounced. But the fact is that desires can't be maintained. They appear and disappear. They have a beginning and an end. They are constantly decaying. If we don't have the new desire, the old desire whether satisfied or not disappears itself.

Every one's desires may not be satisfied for ever but they can be renounced for ever because they are transitory. The difficulty in renouncing a desire is that we have the feeling of 'mine'. If we become free from this feeling of 'mine', we shall become desireless. The desirelessness will lead to detachment. When we become free from the feeling of 'mine', desire and attachment, we attain uniformity, desirelessness and independence automatically.

Pay attentaion to the vital fact. We hold that it is difficult to renounce desires. But is it easy to satisfy them? It is impossible to satisfy all the desires. Even king Daśaratha, the father to Lord Rāma, could not satisfy his desire of not sending his son into exile. Thus, if satisfaction of desires is impossible and renunciation is difficult, which one is easier — satisfaction or renunciation? The answer is clear that desires can be renounced rather than satisfied. But we commit an error that we try to satisfy desires, but we don't make efforts to renounce them. Therefore, a striver should renounce desires.

Desires are of four kinds:–

1. Necessary:— Necessities of life should be satisfied.*

2. The desire which is personal and just but is beyond our power. Such a desire should be rooted out by offering it to God†.

3. Satisfy the desire of others which is just, which is for their welfare and which is within our power to satisfy. Thus by satisfying the desires of others we get strength to renounce our desires.

4. The other desires, besides the above mentioned ones can be rooted out by reflection.

'Mahāśano mahāpāpmā'—This desire is such an enemy which is not satiated by sense enjoyments. Tulasīdāsa in Vinaya Patrikā declares,"This fire of desire is never extinguished by the churned-butter of sense enjoyments" (198).

As the desire for prosperity is never satisfied, similarly the desire for sense enjoyments is never satisfied, it is rather strengthened. So it has been called all devouring. It has been called most sinful because it is the root of all the sinful actions such as theft, robbery and violence etc.

As soon as a desire is born, it induces the man to have a disinclination for his duty, for the self and for God and an inclination to the perishable world. Consequently, he commits sins which lead to hells and birth in lower wombs.

It is because of the desire for sense-enjoyments that the kaleidoscopic and perishable world (body etc.) seems real and he seeks pleasure out of it. At the time of enjoyment he forgets the kaleidoscopic nature of objects and regards them and himself as permanent. If he realizes this fact, he instead of getting entangled in the mirage of pleasures, will have an eye on God and the Self Who are real. It shows that a man enjoys the worldly sense

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* There are four criteria for such a desire.
(i) It is born at present (as desire for food when one is hungry).
(ii) The material to satisfy it is available at present.
(iii) It is impossible to live without satisfying it.
(iv) It's satisfaction does evil neither to him nor to others.
Thus the necessity should be satisfied. When the necessities are satisfied, a man gets strength to renounce desires. But he should not derive pleasure out of the satisfaction of even necessities otherwise it will be conducive to the birth of new desires which can never be satisfied.

† 'There should not be injustice and exploitation in the world.' A striver having offered such a desire to God, becomes carefree. The Lord satisfies it if He thinks it proper.

enjoyments by having a disinclination for the real, God or Self; and by enjoying the sense enjoyments he develops a disinclination for God.

Such a voluptuary can't avoid violence for himself as well as for others. When a rich man leads a luxurious life and enjoys the worldly pleasures, the poor become sad to see him. Thus they suffer. Moreover, he (the self) being a fragment of God is sentient but when he attaches importance to riches or luxuries, the insentient, he becomes a slave to them and has a downfall. All the worldly materials are limited, so they should be shared by all the people. He who enjoys the share of others is a sinner. So a man should have only the bare necessities of life. In the scriptures it is mentioned that even the bare necessities of life should be satisfied only after offering the necessities of life to parents, preceptors, children, women and old people etc.

A voluptuary destroys the worldly material, does violence to those who suffer shortage and leads himself to a downfall, while a wise man (liberated soul) does not do so because all the actions are performed by him according to the scriptural injunctions for the maintenance of the body without expecting any fruit (Gītā 4/21; 18/17). All the possessions including the body of such a wise man are utilized automatically for the welfare of all beings.

The need to maintain the body is neither all devouring nor most sinful and it is satisfied, as hunger is satisfied after having a meal. But a desire is never satisfied, the more we satisfy it, the more intense it becomes.

'Viddhyenamiha vairiṇam'—In fact a man attains peace having renounced the desire for worldly objects yet out of ignorance he believes that he has attained peace by acquiring the worldly objects (i.e., by satisfying the desire). Thus by considering the desire to be the source of enjoyment, he regards it as a friend and well-wisher. So the desire never perishes. Therefore, the Lord urges us to know the desire to be the enemy because it, having blurred our discrimination, leads us to sins.

Desire is the root of all sins, sufferings and hells here as well as hereafter. It results in no benefit.

An Important Fact

An important and easy means to get rid of desire is to render service to others with the body, senses, mind, intellect and life-breath etc., without any selfish motive.

In the Discipline of Action, the actions performed with the physical body, thinking with the subtle body and trance with the causal body, are done only for the world, not for one's own self because the gross body, the subtle body and the causal body have their identity respectively with the gross, subtle and causal world. By doing so he should not derive any pleasure out of them*. It makes him free from attachment to the fruit of action and thus he easily becomes free from attachment to action.

'I should be obeyed', 'this thing may serve my purpose', 'Whatever I say should be honoured'– these are all desires. A desire is very disastrous. When a man satisfies the just desires of others according to his resources, it enables him to renounce his own desires. If we can't fulfil the desires of others, at least we should have the sentiment to do so.

Egoism, attachment and desire bind a man to the world through veil, defect and disquietude, respectively. Renunciation of desire leads to detachment while detachment leads to non-egoism. A striver following the Discipline of Action does not regard the body, senses, mind, intellect, egoism and objects etc., as his or for him but he regards them as the world's and for the world by realizing the reality about them.

When a striver resolves not to give pain to others, he starts rendering service to them. If by chance anyone suffers because of his action, he very humbly tenders a sincere apology. Even if the sufferer does not forgive him, he is automatically forgiven by God. While rendering service to others, a striver should never expect any reward in return. By doing so this enemy (desire) is easily overcome.

* The desire to derive pleasure out of either service or the thought of the welfare of others or trance and to maintain them, is an obstacle to God-Realization (Gītā 14/6). Therefore, a striver should be detached from the three modes–of goodness, of passion and of ignorance because the self is free from all attachment.

Link:–When a man knows that it is desire which compels him to commit sin, why does he commit sin? The Lord explains in the next two verses.

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।
यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥ ३८ ॥

dhūmenāvriyate vahniryathādarśo malena ca
yatholbenāvṛto garbhastathā tenedamāvṛtam

As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror by dust, and as an embryo by the placenta, so is this (knowledge) covered by that (desire). 38

Comment:

'Dhumenāvriyate vahniḥ'— As fire is covered by smoke, so is this knowledge (discrimination) covered by desire.

Discrimination is revealed in the intellect. There are three divisons of intellect — of the nature of goodness, of passion and of ignorance. The intellect by which one knows what ought to be done and what ought not to be done is of the nature of goodness; the intellect by which one wrongly understands what ought to be done and what ought not to be done is of the nature of 'passion' while the intellect by which one sees all things in a perverted way (contrary to the truth) is of the nature of 'ignorance' (Gītā 18/30-32). When desire is born, even the intellect of the nature of goodness is covered by desire as fire by smoke, then the intellect of the mode of passion and ignorance will be definitely covered by it, there is no doubt about it.

As soon as a desire is born, the spiritual path is covered with its smoke. If it is given scope for enhancement, it makes the path totally dark. By holding that the desired objects one deserting us constantly, we can destroy desires.

We have a desire to acquire the worldly objects because they appear to be beautiful and charming. The desire veils discrimination which is a privilege of human birth. Just as fire can burn even when it is covered with smoke, so can discrimination work if a man becomes cautious as soon as desire is born. A man can get rid of the desire at the outset by thinking of the kaleidoscopic and transitory nature of the worldly objects etc., which he wants to acquire.

'Yathādarśo malena ca'— When dirt accumulates on the surface of a mirror, it can't reflect an object. Similarly, the dirt of desire veils knowledge (discrimination) and a striver can't decide what he ought to do and what he ought not to do. Because of the desire he hankers after worldly pleasures and prosperity and he has a downfall. This is the second stage of desire.

A striver should realize that it is not the thing but its proper use, which is significant. So instead of having a desire to acquire more and more, he thinks to make a proper use of it. Moreover, he can't acquire objects merely by desire.

The less importance he will attach to the worldly objects, the more importance he will attach to God. When he stops attaching importance to the worldly objects altogether, he will realize God and desire will totally perish.

'Yatholbenāvṛto garbhaḥ'— When dirt accumulates on the surface of a mirror though it does not reflect the face yet it can be known that it is a mirror. But when an embryo is covered by the placenta, it can't be known whether the child is male or female. Similarly the knowledge (discrimination) is so much veiled at this third stage that he totally forgets his duty and his desire is intensified.

If a desire is not satisfied, it gives birth to anger. From anger arises delusion; from delusion there is destruction of discrimination; from destruction of discrimination he does not do what ought to be done but

indulges in evil acts such as falsehood, fraud, dishonesty, injustice, oppression and other sinful acts. The Lord does not want to call such people human beings (men). Therefore, the Lord while describing such people in the sixteenth chapter (from the eighth to the eighteenth verses) has not used any such word which stands for human beings. The Lord has called the people who have heaven as their goal 'Kāmātmānaḥ' (desire incarnate) (Gītā 2/43) because they are the embodiments of desires. Having identified themselves with desires they hold that there is no higher aim than the gratification of desires (Gītā 16/11).

[When desires are strengthened, a man totally forgets that the real aim of human life is God-Realization. But if due to the past influences or good company or any other factor he comes to know the real aim of human life, he can attain salvation or God-Realization].

'Tathā tenedamāvṛtam'—In this verse the Lord has given three illustrations pertaining to the covering of discrimination by desire. It means that discrimination is covered by desire in three stages. But those who hold that desire is the cause of happiness and so depend on it can't renounce it (desire), while the strivers who practise spiritual discipline know it in its reality and can root it out.

The Lord here has described the three stages of desire so that a striver may slay the enemy in the form of desire, as ordered by Him in the forty-first and forty-third verses of this chapter. In fact desire crosses the first two stages so quickly that a man can't perceive them. Then the desire leads him to all sorts of sins and sufferings. Therefore, a striver through discrimination should not allow a desire to originate. But if it is born, it should be renounced either in the first or the second stage, it should not be allowed to reach the third stage.

An Important Fact

As smoke shows the presence of fire, and as mirror and embryo are identified even when they are covered respectively with dust and placenta, so discrimination is possessed by every human being even when it is covered by desire. But due to the force of desire discrimination is not used.

According to the scriptures 'Mala' (Sin) (Impurity), 'Vikṣepa' (Confusion) and 'Āvaraṇa' (Veil) are said to be the three stumbling blocks to God-Realization. These defects are born of the affinity of man for the unreal world. This affinity for the world is created because of desire. Thus the root of all the evils is desire. When desire is renounced, affinity for the unreal world is renounced. When the affinity for the unreal is renounced, all the evils perish and discrimination is revealed.

So long as the worldly objects seem real, beautiful and charming, a man attaches importance to them. This attachment is the main obstacle to God-Realization, as it is conducive to the three defects — sin, confusion and veil. Out of these three, sin is regarded as the most deadly defect. Desire is the root of sin. When a striver resolves not to commit sin in future, the defects are rooted out and his sin begins to decay. But when he renounces the desire totally, all his sins perish.

In the Śrīmadbhāgavata Lord Kṛṣṇa has pointed out that a man with desire can attain salvation by following the Discipline of Action (Performance of action without expecting fruit— 'Karmayogastu kāmināṁ' (11/20/7). So a person who is not free from desire, need not lose heart because only he who has a desire will get rid of it. Desires can be renounced easily through the Discipline of Action. When a striver performs any action whether it is mundane or spiritual, he should think "Why do I perform it and how do I perform it?" By thinking so he will constantly have an eye on the aim of his life. Consequently, he will perform only virtuous actions being free from attachment and the desire for fruit. This performance of actions without attachment and the desire for reward will lead him to salvation.

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा।
कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥ ३९ ॥

āvṛtaṁ jñānametena jñānino nityavairiṇā
kāmarūpeṇa kaunteya duṣpūreṇānalena ca

O Arjuna, wisdom is enveloped by this constant enemy of the wise (discerning soul) in the form of desire which is insatiable like fire. 39

Comment:

'Etena'—This term has been used for desire which has been declared by the Lord most sinful in the thirty-seventh verse of this chapter.

'Duṣpūreṇānalena ca'— As fire is never satiated when clarified butter is added to it, it rather grows stronger, so is desire never satisfied by enjoying the objects of desire, it is rather strengthened (Śrīmad-bhāgavata 9/19/14; Manusmṛti 2/94). The fire of desire devours everything which comes into its contact.

Sundaradāsa has also expressed the same idea when he says, "The richer a man grows, the more he hankers after worldly prosperity. A poor man may desire to gain only a few rupees. But when he gains them, he has desire for a hundred and then a thousand, and after that a million and then a billion and trillion and then the ownership of the entire universe. Yet this form of desire will never be satiated. It is only by contentment that this desire can be satisfied."

A poor man is not so greedy as is a rich man. When a man earns a hundered rupees, he has a desire to earn a thousand rupees. It means that he feels that he needs nine hundred more. When he earns a thousand rupees he desires to have ten thousand rupees. It means that he needs nine thousand more. When he gains ten thousand rupees he has desire to gain a lac of rupees. Thus he needs ninety thousand more. Thus the richer he grows, the more greedy he becomes. On the other hand a contented man, being free form all desires, is the king of kings.

In fact it is not wealth but desire for wealth which is an obstacle to God-Realization. This desire deprives the rich and the poor equally of God-Realization. It can never be satiated. A man can get rid of it by renouncing it.

'Kāmarūpeṇa'—The desire to derive pleasure out of the affinity for the insentient is called 'Kāma'. This desire manifests itself in differnt forms, such as lust (for gold, power and of the flesh), craving (for things), attachment (to loving and charming objects), hope (to acquire something) and greed (to acquire more and more). When a man's desire is intensified it is followed by solicitation. These are the different forms of desire.

'Jñānino nityavairiṇā'— Here the term 'Jñāninaḥ' stands for the wise striver who remains engaged in practising the spiritual discipline because it is he who recognizes this enemy in the form of desire and slays it. The worldly people consider it pleasant.

The Lord declares that desire is the constant enemy of a wise striver. As soon as a desire is born, the thought comes to his mind that it will lead him to suffering. Desires involve dependence on the world and create importance of the world which are stambling blocks to the spiritual path. It pricks him at the outset that it will result in adversity.

The ignorant who are engrossed in sensual pleasures hold that desire is their friend because they derive pleasure out of the objects. Without desire objects can't provide pleasure. But the fact is that the desire and the pleasures lead him to sorrows, sufferings, imprisonment and hells etc. Thus desire is a constant enemy of the ignorant also, but they are not aware of it, while wise strivers are aware of it.

'Āvṛtaṁ jñānam'— Every being is endowed with discrimination. In the case of man it can develop but in birds, beasts

and other births it is confined to the maintenance of the body. In the case of men also it is veiled by desire which does not let them follow the spiritual (sentient) path of God-Realization but keeps them engaged in mundane pleasures.

Every one likes loving and true words and hates harsh and false words. It means that every person has this knowledge (discrimination) of good and bad, virtue and vice, right and wrong. In spite of this knowledge an ignorant person uses harsh language, tells a lie and does not perform his duty scrupulously because his discrimination is veiled by desire.

A man thinks that he derives joy out of the sense-objects. But in fact he gets joy by renouncing them. Every one knows that during wakefulness and sleep a man feels happy and sad because of his affinity for the sense-objects. But during sound sleep he does not remember sense-objects at all. So when he awakes he says that he had a very peaceful and sound sleep. Moreover, he gets tired during wakefulness, while he is refreshed after a sound sleep. It means that it is renunciation of the sense-objects which provides joy or peace.

When a man desires money , his mind is attached to it. But when it is acquired, the mind renounces this attachment and so he feels happy. Had the money provided him joy, he would have never felt sad so long as he had money. But he feels sad even after possessing that money.

When a man desires anything, he has to depend on it. Suppose a man has a desire to buy a watch, he feels sad without it; this is dependence upon it. He thinks that if he acquires money, he can buy a watch i.e., he feels independent if he has money but dependent without money. But this is a wrong notion. If he acquires money and buys a watch he, instead of having dependence on the watch, has dependence on money because money is also different from the self. But when a man's discrimination is veiled by desire, he realizes his dependence on objects but he does not realize his dependence on money. He thinks that he has become independent because of money. It is very difficult to renounce such a dependence which disguises itself as independence.

The world is transitory. All the worldly objects such as the body, wealth, property etc., are decaying every moment and are separating from us. But while enjoying them we forget that they are kaleidoscopic, we regard them as eternal and permanent. Not to talk of the common people, even a striver gets entangled in the pleasures by considering them eternal and permanent. It so happens because his discrimination is enveloped by desire.

An Important Fact

The Lord declares that desire is the constant enemy of the wise so that a man may save himself from it and may attain bliss, because desire is the root of all sins and sufferings. Once a man was looking for his wife. People asked him, "What is the name of your wife?" He replied, "Disgrace." They again asked, "What is your name?" He replied, "Wicked." People said, "Don't be agitated, she is a very chaste and faithful wife, she will come to you, because disgrace ever accompanies the wicked." Similarly sufferings automatically accompany the man who hankers after the perishable pleasures.

A man wants to avoid sufferings but he does not renounce desire which is the root of sufferings. In the Rāmacaritamānasa it is declared, "A man can't attain bliss even in dream so long as he does not renounce desire" (7/90/1). The Lord by the terms 'Analena' and 'Duṣpūreṇa' wants to explain that the desire for enjoyment of worldly objects is never satiated. The more he enjoys them, the more the desire for them is strengthened. In order to satiate it, he is inclined to sinful acts. When he has desire for wealth, he wants to earn it by fair means or foul. Then at the second stage the desire engages him in theft and robberies, while in the third stage it leads him to commit violence and even murder. Thus the desire for pleasures makes the life miserable here as well as hereafter.

Link:–In order to slay an enemy it is necessary to know where it resides. Therefore, the Lord in the next verse mentions the seats of desire, the constant enemy of the wise (discerning soul).

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥ ४० ॥

indriyāṇi mano buddhirasyādhiṣṭhānamucyate
etairvimohayatyeṣa jñānamāvṛtya dehinam

The senses, the mind and the intellect are said to be its seat. Veiling wisdom by these (senses, mind and intellect), it deludes the embodied (soul). 40

Comment:

'Indriyāṇi mano buddhirasyādhiṣṭhānamucyate'— Desire is said to have five abodes (1) objects (Gītā 3/34) (2) senses (3) mind (4) intellect and (5) assumed ego ('I') viz., doer (Gītā 2/59). Though it seems to reside in five abodes, yet in fact it resides in the 'assumed ego'. As it seems to abide in these five places. They are called its seats.

All the actions are performed with the body, senses, mind and intellect. If desire resides in them, it hinders the performance of spiritual actions. Therefore, a Karmayogī (man of action) having abandoned attachment and the fruit of actions, performs actions only by the body, senses, mind and intellect, for the purification of the self (Gītā 5/11).

In fact desire resides in the assumed ego (i.e., identification of the self with the body etc). This ego or 'I'ness is merely assumed. "I belong to a particular caste, creed or order of life"—this is merely assumption. Sins perish after bearing fruits but desire which resides in the assumed ego gives birth to new sins. Therefore, it is desire which binds the embodied soul.

In the Mahābhārata it is mentioned, "In the world it is only desire which binds a man. He who is liberated from the bondage of desire, becomes eligible to attain the Eternal (Absolute)" (Śāntiparva 251/7).

'Etairvimohayatyeṣa jñānamāvṛtya dehinam'— It is because of desire that a man does what he ought not do and does not do what he ought to do. Thus the embodied soul is deluded by desire.

In the second chapter the Lord declared—'From desire springs anger' (2/62) and 'From anger arises delusion' (2/63). It means that if anyone becomes an obstacle to the satisfaction of a desire, anger arises. But if the desire is satisfied, it gives birth to greed and from greed arises delusion. Desire is an evolute of the mode of passion, while delusion is an evolute of the mode of ignorance. The mode of passion and the mode of ignorance are not far from each other *. Desire deludes the embodied soul through senses, mind and intellect. The desire, which is an evolute of the mode of passion, is transformed to delusion, which is an evolute of ignorance.

A man has a desire to enjoy the sense-objects (sensual pleasures). Firstly he does not get those desired sense-objects. However if he gets them, they don't stay. In spite of it he desires to get them some how or the other and thinks of so many devices to obtain them. Therefore first the desire attracts the senses towards objects. Then the senses attract the mind while the senses and the mind attract the intellect. Thus desire, veiling wisdom, through the senses, mind and intellect deludes the embodied soul and drives it to ruin.

* Among the modes of ignorance, passion and goodness the ratio of the distance is 1:10:100. It means that modes of ignorance and passion are near each other, while the mode of goodness is far-way from them.

It is a rule that a master terminates the service of a sincere servant, he is not likely to get such a sincere servant again. Similarly if a servant does not carry out the order of the virtuous master and does not serve him, he will not get an opportunty to work under such good masters. In the same way if a person by misusing the human body, instead of realizing God, wastes it in hankering after worldly pleasures, and prosperity, he will not get this human life again. It is because of the impurity of mind that a man rejects good things; and the mind is impurified by desire. Therefore, first of all a striver should renounce desire.

'Dehinam vimohayati'— It means that desire deludes only the embodied soul i.e., the soul which has identified itself with the body and has accepted the relationship of 'mine' with it. The Lord at the beginning of His gospel explained that the soul is different from the body (Gītā 2/11-30). This is also every one's experience. The desire velling wisdom, deludes the embodied soul (the soul which accepts its affinity for the body), not the pure soul. A man (the soul) assuming the body as'I', 'mine' and for 'me' attaches importance to the perishable objects and gets attached to them. This attachment creates affinity for them. This affinity gives birth to desire. The desire having deluded the man (embodied soul) leads him to the worldly bondage.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse tells Arjuna the device of slaying this enemy i.e., desire and orders him to kill it.

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।
पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ।। ४१ ।।

tasmāttvamindriyāṇyādau niyamaya bharatarṣabha
pāpmānaṁ prajahi hyenaṁ jñānavijñānanāśanam

There fore, O best of Bharatas (Arjuna), controlling the senses first, slay this sinful destroyer of wisdom and realization. 41

Comment:

'Tasmāttvamindriyāṇyādau niyamya bharatarṣabha' —Senses are said to be controlled when they don't enjoy the sense-objects but are used in order to maintain the body or to attain the spiritual goal. It means that they should neither have an aversion to disagreeable action nor an attachment to agreeable action (Gītā 18/10). Actions performed with attachment and aversion strengthen attachment and aversion and they drive a man to ruin. Therefore, let the scripture be the authority for determining what should be done and what should not be done (Gītā 16/24). Thus by following the scriptural injunction pertaining to the performance of prescribed actions and non-performance of forbidden actions, senses are controlled.

So long as a man is swayed by his senses, he can't have an eye on the goal of life. Without having an eye on the goal of life i.e., without attaining it, desire can't be totally killed. So first the Lord has urged to control the senses in order to slay desire.

First, the senses get entangled in their objects by which desire for those objects is born. When a man performs actions with desire, he comes under the full sway of senses and has a downfall. But he who performs his duty, by controlling the senses, without expecting any fruit, quickly attains salvation.

'Enaṁ jñānavijñānanāśanam'— The term 'Jñāna' also stands for the knowledge of the scriptures (Gītā 18/42). But in this context the term stands for discrimination (what should be done and what should not be done). The term 'Vijñāna' stands for Self-Realization.

Discrimination and Self-Realization—both are axiomatic. All the people have not realized the self but discrimination has been bestowed upon them. The term 'Anicchannapi' used by Arjuna in the thirty-sixth verse of this chapter also proves that every human being possesses this faculty of discrimination. It is by discrimination that he knows what is virtue and what is vice (sin). So it is by discrimination that he does not want to commit a sin. But when discrimination is veiled by desire he commits sin without thinking of the consequences. But when discrimination remains aroused, he performs actions having thought of the consequences.

Thus desire veils discrimination as well as Self-Realization i.e., it does not let them reveal themselves. So it has been called the sinful destroyer. In fact it does not destroy them, but it veils them. This 'Veiling' has been called destroying here. Discrimination and Self-Realization are never destroyed while desire is destroyed. When clouds appear before the eyes, it is said that the sun has been covered by the clouds. But in fact the sun is not covered, it is the eyes which are covered. Similarly, when it is said that desire has veiled discrimination and Self-Realization, it means that they are not veiled but it is the intellect which is veiled.

'Pāpmānaṁ hi prajahi'— Desire is the root of all sins Having veiled discrimination, it makes a man blind. So he can't recognize the distinction between virtues and sins and thus indulges in sins which lead him to ruin. So the Lord orders to slay desire by calling it sinful.

A man wants to lead the lonely life of an ascetic by renouncing the household affairs but he does not renounce desire; he does not even think to renounce it. If desires are renounced, everything will be set right automatically. When a man dies with unfulfilled desires, they lead him to the next birth. It means that desires lead him to the bondage of birth and death. Thus, desires do nothing except binding him.

When a man is attracted towards the worldly objects, desires is born. This desire veils discrimination and he indulges in sense pleasure. The pleasure of birds and beasts is confined to the pleasure born of the contact of senses with objects. But a man desires objects and money and also indulges in hoarding money. In order to hoard money he adopts foul means such as falsehood, fraud, thefts and robberies etc. Moreover, he becomes proud of himself. This pride is a demoniac trait. Thus he is totally damned so the Lord orders Arjuna to slay the sinful desire.

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥ ४२ ॥
एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥ ४३ ॥

indriyāṇi parāṇyāhurindriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ
manasastu parā budhiryo buddheḥ paratastu saḥ
evaṁ buddheḥ paraṁ buddhvā saṁstabhyātmānamātmanā
jahi śatruṁ mahābāho kāmarūpaṁ durāsadam

They say that the senses are greater (than the gross body); greater (excellent, powerful, illuminator, extensive and subtle) than the senses is the mind; greater than the mind is the intellect, but greater than the intellect is that (the desire). Thus knowing that desire is beyond intellect, subdoing the self by the self, slay thou, O mighty-armed Arjuna, the tough enemy in the form of desire which is hard to conquer. 42-43

Comment:

'Indriyāṇi parāṇyāhuḥ'— Senses are superior to the body or objects of senses. It means that the senses know the objects but objects don't known senses. Senses live without objects but without senses the existence of objects is not proved. Objects can't illumine senses but senses illumine objects. Senses remain the same while objects go on changing. Objects come within the range of senses while senses don't come within the range of objects. Eyes (senses) can perceive the physical body and objects but the body and objects can't perceive the senses. So senses are greater, more powerful, more subtle and have a wider range of activity than the objects and the physical body.

'Indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ'— Senses don't know the mind while the mind knows all the senses. Every sense knows only its own objects but does not know the objects of other senses. Ears can perceive only sound but can't perceive touch, form, taste and smell. Similarly, tongue can only taste, nose can only smell, eyes can only see and skin can only touch. But the mind knows the five senses and their objects. Therefore, the mind is superior to, more powerful, more subtle, has a wider range of activity than senses and is their illuminator.

'Manasastu parā buddhiḥ'—The mind does not know the intellect but the intellect knows the mind and senses. The intellect knows whether the mind is quiet or turbulent and whether senses function properly or not. It means that the intellect knows the mind and its thoughts as well the senses and their objects. Therefore, the intellect is greater more powerful more subtle and has a wider range of activity than the mind and is its illuminator.

'Yaḥ buddheḥ paratastu saḥ'— The master of intellect is ego; therefore a person says 'My intellect'. Intellect is an instrument and 'ego' is the doer. The instrument depends on the doer. Desire resides in the insentient portion of ego. But it is because of the identification of the self with the insentient body etc., that desire seems to reside in the pure self (the sentient).

In fact desire resides in 'ego' 'I' because ego has the desire to enjoy pleasures and so becomes the enjoyer....The enjoyer, enjoyment and the object to be enjoyed belong to the same class otherwise the enjoyer can't be attracted towards the objects. But there is no desire in the Self Which is the illuminator of the enjoyer, enjoyment and the objects to be enjoyed. All the insentient object such as the body, the mind, the senses, the intellect and the ego are fragments of nature (Prakṛti). Beyond ego there is the self, a fragment of God. The Self is the base, the root, the cause, the inspirer of the body, senses, mind, intellect and ego and is subtler, greater, stronger, wider than all of them and is also their illuminator.

There is pleasure or pain in the insentient nature (Prakṛti) of the embodied soul while the sentient (soul) does not undergo any modifications such as pleasure or pain etc. The self (soul) is the knower of this modification. But when It identifies Itself with the insentient (body etc.) It has to undergo pleasure and pain. The sentient (soul) by identifying Itself with the insentient (body etc.) becomes the enjoyer. In the inert only, there is no enjoyership. The enjoyership remains in the ego (where there is identification of the soul with the body). The term 'Asya' used in the fifty-ninth verse of the second chapter denotes the enjoyer while the term 'Parama' denotes God, unattached Universal Soul. 'When a striver realizes 'Param' (God or Self) his taste or relish also turns away (Gītā 2/59). A man has desire in order to derive pleasure or joy while the self is naturally a heap of joy. Therefore on God-Realization or Self-Realization desire (desire for sensual pleasure) totally perishes for ever.

A Vital Fact

The physical (gross) body is the object of senses, senses are the external instruments, while mind and intellect are the

internal instruments. Senses are beyond (superior, stronger, wider, subtler and illuminator) the physical body, while intellect is body senses. Ego which is the doer, is beyond intellect and desire resides in the ego. The self is sentient, unaltered (uniform) and an embodiment of truth consciousness and bliss consolidated. But when It identifies Itself with the insentient body etc., ego is born and the self becomes the doer or agent. Thus the doer (agent) has two aspects—the insentient one and the sentient one. A man (the embodied soul) because of the insentient aspect is attracted towards the world i.e., the worldly desires are born, while because of the sentient aspect he is attracted towards God or the spiritual discipline*. As the insentient aspect is perishable, so are the worldly desires, and as the sentient aspect is eternal, so are the spiritual desires (needs). The mundane desires are renounced while the spiritual ones (of the renunciation of the world, of Self-Realization, of devotion to God) are satisfied. The mundane desires can appear but can't exist while the spiritual desires can be suppressed but can't perish because the former are unreal while the latter are real. Therefore a striver should neither hope for the fulfilment of the mundane desires nor lose heart by thinking of the unfulfilment of the spiritual desires.

In fact the only desire of a man (the soul) is to realize God Whose fragment he is. But by identifying himself with the body etc., he, by an error of judgment, forgets the real desire and hankers after the worldly pleasures and prosperity. But the real never ceases to be. The desire for the real can never be destroyed. In a striver two sorts of desire remain– one for God-Realization and the other for worldly pleasures. So there is a duel between the two. It is because of the duel that when a striver practises spiritual discipline such as adoration, meditation and good company etc., his spiritual desires are aroused but at other times he hankers after worldly pleasures and prosperity. While having mundane desire a striver can't even resolve that he has to practise spiritual discipline. He can't progress in the spiritual path so long as the spiritual desire is not aroused. When he resolves that he has only to realize God, the duel ceases to exist and only the keen spiritual desire remains, which enables him to realize God easily (Gītā 5/3). So for a striver it is indispensable to root out this duel between the mundane desire and the spiritual one.

The self has an automatic attraction or inclination towards God Whose fragment It is. This attraction is known as devotion. When the Self accepts Its affinity for the world, that devotion is suppressed and desire springs. So long as there is desire, devotion (love) is not aroused. Without devotion desire is not killed. The insentient fragment hankers after the sensual pleasures, while the sentient one is attracted towrads God. Therefore, in fact desire resides in the insentient fragment but it is so because the two are identified. When the sentient (Self) does not accept Its affinity for the insentient, desire perishes. It means that as soon as the sentient (Self) renounces Its affinity for the insentient (body etc.), 'Ego' (the identification of the self with the insentient) perishes and consequently desire perishes.

Desire abides in the insentient fragment of ego. The reason is that an enjoyer can be attracted towards the objects of enjoyment of the world, (the world which is seen), the senses and intellect with which the world is seen, only if they belong to the same class, because attraction is possible for the objects of the same class only. As eyes are attracted to the beautiful colour or form, so is the case with other senses. Intellect is attracted towards discrimination

* The identification of the self with the body etc., can be explained by an illustration. A block of iron with four edges has no burning power but when by coming into contact with fire it identifies itself with fire, it develops the burning power and fire, in sipte of having no edges, becomes of four edges. But a magnet attracts only iron, not fire because iron and magnet belong to the same class and the fire automatically calms down. In the same way when there is identification of the self with the body, the sentient portion is attracted towards God, while the insentient towards the world. When the sentient portion is attracted towards God the insentient is left because is perishable. But when the insentient portion is atracted towards the world, the sentient one remains because it is eternal.

or thought, not to sound etc. If it is attracted, it is because of its company with senses. Similarly, the self has Its identity with God and so It is attracted towards God. This identity can be realized only when the Self totally renounces Its affinity for the insentient (Matter). As soon as this identity is realized devotion (Love) is aroused in which there is total lack of Matter (the unreal).

The insentient fragment 'causal body' is a very subtle fragment of the cosmic intelligence which is an evolute of nature. Desire resides in this causal body. It is because of the identification of the self with the causal body that desire seems to reside in the self. When there is no identification, a man realizes the Self Which is pure and uniform. In that case desire totally perishes.

'Evaṁ buddheḥ paraṁ buddhvā'—In the previous verses it has been explained, "The senses are greater than the body, greater than the senses is the mind and greater than the mind is the intellect." But now in this verse when the Lord declares that greater than intellect is desire, He means to say that desire resides in 'ego', not in the self. Had it resided in the self, it might have never perished. It is born when the self accepts Its affinity for the insentient body etc. In fact it resides in the insentient fragment (Matter) but appears in the Self. Therefore, knowing this desire, which is beyond intellect a striver should slay it.

'Saṁstabhyātmānamātmanā'—The method to slay this desire is to restrain the self by the self viz., to accept the real affinity of the self for the pure self or for God Whose fragment It is. The same fact has been pointed out by the Lord in the fifth and the sixth verses of the sixth chapter when he declares, "One should raise oneself by one's self alone." and "The self has been conquered by the self."

The self is a fragment of God while the body, senses, mind and intellect are the fragments of the world. When the self having a disinclination for God, has an inclination to nature (the world), desires are born. Desires are born when there is privation and a man (the self) feels privation because of his affinity for the world because the world is unreal which has no existence (Gītā 2/16) but like a mirage it seems to exist. As soon as the affinity for the world is renounced, desires perish because the self has no shortage as the Lord declares, "The real (Self) never ceases to be" (Gītā 2/16).

Even when a man has disinclination for God and assumes his affinity for the world, his real desire (need or hunger) remains to realize God, Whose, fragment he (the self) is. He wants to live alive for ever, he wants to possess all knowledge and he wants to be happy for ever—this is his desire to attain God Who is the Embodiment of Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. But it is because of his affinity for the world that by an error of judgment he wants to satisfy this desire (Need), by enjoying the worldly pleasures. But this desire can never be satisfied with the worldly objects. So it will have to be slain.

He who has established his affinity for the world, is also capable of renouncing it. So the Lord orders Arjuna to slay this desire by dissociating himself from the world, through his own efforts.

This dissociation needs no practice because practice is done with the help of the world (body, senses, mind and intellect). In fact a man gets established in the self or realizes God by renouncing affinity for the world.

A Vital Fact

When the Self accepts Its affinity for the world, It has a desire to enjoy the worldly pleasures as well as to realize God. He (the self) by an error wants to satisfy the need for God-Realization (Who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss) by the worldly materials. Therefore, both his desires remain unfulfilled.

A man can know the world by dissociating himself from it, and the Lord by identifying himself with Him, because he (the self) is different from the world while he has identity with God. But he accepts his identity or

affinity for the world, in order to acquire the worldly things, which is never possible. Similarly, he accepts that he is different from God which is also impossible. Spiritual desire is necessary in order to root out the worldly desires. When the spiritual desires grows keen, the mundane desires automatically perish. When the mundane desires are rooted out, the spiritual desires is satisfied viz., God Who is ever attained is attained*. God always pervades everywhere but a man does not realize Him because of his entanglement with worldly desires.

'Jahi śatruṁ mahābāho kāmarūpaṁ durāsadam'— The term 'Mahābāho' means one possessed of long and mighty arms i.e., the brave warrior. By addressing Arjuna as 'mahābāho' the Lord means to say that he is brave enough to slay the enemy in the form of desire.

It is hard for a man to conquer this enemy so long as he has affinity for the world. This desire deviates even the wise from the performance of their duty by veiling their discrimination and so they have a downfall. Therefore, the Lord has said that it is hard to conquer. Therefore, a striver instead of losing heart, should be aware of this enemy.

Desires appear and disappear, whether they are fully satisfied or partly satisfied, or not satisfied at all, while the self ever remains uniform and knows their appearance and disappearance. So he can easily renounce his affinity, which is merely assumed, for them. Therefore, a striver should not be afraid of the desires. If he is determined† to attain his aim, he can slay 'desire' very easily.

Every one is independent, qualified, deserving and able to realize God, but it is not so with desires, because they can never be satiated. The Lord has bestowed upon beings this human body so that they may attain Him. So they can easily renounce desires, but it is because of their attachment to the worldly persons and objects etc., that it seems difficult to renounce desires.

The Lord creates unfavourable circumstances so that a man may be warned not to have a desire for favourable circumstances, otherwise they will lead him to sufferings. It is a rule that he who has a desire for worldly persons and objects, can't escape pain. The Lord declares, "The pleasures that are born of contacts (with objects) are only sources of pain (Gītā 5/22).

The soul possesses infinite strength. It is because of the power derived from the soul that the intellect, mind and senses seem powerful. But It forgets Its strength because of Its affinity for the insentient, and regards Itself as subordinate to the intellect, mind and senses etc. Therefore, it is necessary to know the Self and recognize Its power in order to slay the enemy in the form of desire.

Desire is born out of the affinity of the self for the insentient (Matter) and it resides in it but seems to reside in the self. If he does not accept his affinity for the insentient, desire has no existence. Therefore, when the Lord urges Arjuna to slay desire, He means to say that desire has no existence of its own. A desire appears and it automatically disappears. So if he has no new desires, the old ones automatically disappear.

A man becomes aware of something wanting in himself only when he regards the worldly objects such as the body etc., as 'I', 'mine' and 'for me', but he wants to make up for the lack by the worldly materials. So he has desire to acquire them. But it is impossible to make up that lack by those materials because he (the self) is imperishable while they are perishable. Thus he by desiring transitory objects gains nothing but suffering. Therefore by calling desire an enemy the Lord urges Arjuna to slay it.

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* When all the desires of a striver are rooted out, the mortal man becomes immortal and he very will realizes the Eternal." Kathopaniṣad 2/3/14); Bṛhadāraṇyaka 4/4/7).
"O Lotus eyed ! when a man renounces all his desires. he attains God-Realization (Śrīmadbhāgavata 7/10/9).

† A man's only aim is to attain the imperishable Lord, not the perishable world. He has a desire to acquire the perishable objects. Aim remains the same constantly while desires change. Aim is realized while desires may or may not be satisfied but they disappear. A man wants to realize his aim (God) even though his body may be broken into pieces.

This desire can be easily slain through the Discipline of Action because a striver following the Discipline of Action, performs every major or minor action for the good of others rather than to satiate his own desire. All his actions are performed for the welfare of others without any selfish motive. All his resources are not his own but have been acquired and are likely to be lost. So he uses them for the welfare of the world by regarding them as the world's without any selfish motive. Thus he gets rid of the desires easily, and consequently attains his aim of God-Realization. Then nothing remains to be done, to be known and to be acquired for him.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे कर्मयोगो नाम तृतीयोऽध्यायः ॥ ३ ॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde karmayogo nāma tṛtīyo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ, Tat, Sat, the names to the Lord, in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavadgītā, the knowledge of Brahma; the Supreme, the science of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the third discourse designated 'Karmayoga or the Discipline of Action'.

This chapter is designated 'Karmayoga' (The Discipline of Action) because the Discipline of Action has not been described so clearly in any other chapter as in this chapter.

Words, letters and Uvāca (said) in the Third Chapter

(1) In this chapter in **'Atha tṛtīyo'dhyāyaḥ'** there are three words, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are eight words, in verses there are five hundred and forty-two words and there are thirteen concluding words. Thus the total number of the words is five hundred and sixty-six.

(2) In this chapter in **'Atha tṛtīyo'dhyāyaḥ'** there are seven letters, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are twenty-six letters, in verses there are one thousand, three hundred and seventy-six letters and there are forty-five concluding letters. Thus the total number of words is one thousand, four hundred and fifty-four. In each of the verses of this chapter there are thirty-two letters.

(3) In this chapter there are four **Uvāca** (said) **'Arjuna Uvāca'** twice and **Śrībhagavānuvāca'** twice.

Metres Used in the Third Chapter

In this chapter, 'ra-gaṇa' being used in the first quarter of first and thirty-seventh verses and in the third quarter of eleventh verse, there is **'ra-vipulā'**; 'na-gaṇa' being used in the first quarter of fifth verse there is **'na-vipulā';** 'bha-gaṇa' being used in the first quarter of nineteenth, twenty-sixth and thirty-fifth and in the third quarter of eighth and twenty-first verses, there is **'bha-vipulā';** 'na-gaṇa' and 'ra-gaṇa' being respectivily in the first and third quarter of the seventh verse, there is **'saṅkīrṇa- vipulā'** metre. The remaining thirty-three verses have the characteristics of **'pathyā-vaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

Śrī Hariḥ

FOURTH CHAPTER

Introduction

The Lord in the thirty-ninth verse of the second chapter said to Arjuna, "This is the wisdom of Sāṅkhya given to thee to attain equanimity, O Arjuna. Now listen to equanimity to be acquired through the Discipline of Action in which a person by performing action for the welfare of others without any selfish motive attains equanimity." Then according to the context, in response to Arjuna's question Lord Kṛṣṇa having described the marks of the man of steady wisdom, completes this topic.

At the beginning of the third chapter Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, "If You think that knowledge is superior to action, why do You urge me to do this savage deed (war) ?" In response to his question the Lord from the fourth to the twenty-ninth verses lays emphasis on the performance of actions by which a man attains equanimity. In the thirtieth verse He says that surrendering all actions to Him, with the discriminative insight, free from desire and egoism he should perform actions, delivered from the mental agitation. In the thirty-first and thirty-second verses He declares the sweet fruit of following His preaching (explained in the previous verse) and the harm in not following it. In the thirty-fifth verse He declares, "Better is death in one's own duty." In the thrity-sixth verse Arjuna asks, "By what is a man impelled to commit sin ?" The Lord replies, "It is desire, all devouring and most sinful, which is the enemy," and ordered Arjuna to slay this enemy.

Though the Lord's teaching continues from the thirty-seventh verse, yet in the forty-third verse when the answer to Arjuna's question is over, sage Veda Vyāsa concludes the third chapter and begins the fourth chapter. It shows that the Lord having answered Arjuna's question, gives a pause and then begins again the Discipline of Action which was being described in the forty-seventh and forty-eighth verses of the second chapter by the term 'Imam' (This) in the first verse of the fourth chapter. Therefore, the fourth chapter is regarded as an appendix to the third chapter.

There are two important factors pertaining to the Discipline of Action—1. Performance of actions and (2) Special knowledge about actions. Arjuna wants to renounce the performance of actions. So he says to Lord Kṛṣṇa, "Why do You ask me to be engaged in this savage deed ?" Therefore, the Lord lays special emphasis on the performance of duty, specially in the third chapter, while in the fourth chapter He imparts knowledge about actions. He declares, "I shall teach thee such action (the nature of action and inaction), after knowing which thou shalt be liberated from evil (the wheel of birth and death) (4/16).

This Karmayoga in spite of being beginningless was lost to the world through long lapse of time because of the absence of such scholarly teachers (sages) who could impart it. The Lord in the first three verses describing how Karmayoga was handed down from ancient times, proves how it existed from times immemorial.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम् ।
विवस्वान्मनवे प्राह मनुरिक्ष्वाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥ १ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

imaṁ vivasvate yogaṁ proktavānahamavyayam
vivasvānmanave prāha manurikṣvākave'bravīt

The Blessed Lord said:

I taught this imperishable Yoga to Vivasvān (the sun-god); he told it to Manu and Manu proclaimed it to Ikṣvāku.

Comment:

'Imaṁ vivasvate yogaṁ proktavānahamavyayam'—The kings such as Sūrya, Manu and Ikṣvāku, who have been mentioned by the Lord were householders and they attained perfection through the Discipline of Action leading a householder's life. Therefore, here the terms 'Imam, avyayam yogam' (this, imperishable, Yoga) stand for 'Karmayoga' (the Discipline of Action).

Though Karmayoga has been described in the Purāṇas (historical records) and Upaniṣads (philosophical portions of the Vedas) also, yet it is not as thorough and detailed as in the Gītā.

The Lord is eternal, His fragment, the soul is also eternal and so is the affinity of the soul for the Lord. Therefore, all the disciplines (of Action, of Knowledge and of Devotion) are also eternal*. Here the term 'Avyayam' shows that Karmayoga is eternal.

The affinity of the soul for God is eternal. Just as a chaste wife does not have to make efforts to be her husband's, in like manner a striver does not have to put in any effort in order to be God's. But when he accepts his affinity for the perishable actions, objects and incidents etc., he does not realize his eternal affinity for God. Therefore, a Karmayogī in order to renounce his assumed affinity for the world, utilizes his body, senses, mind and intellect etc., for rendering service to the world, by regarding them as the world's. He thinks that just as the smallest particle of dust is a fragment of the huge earth, so is the body, a fragment of the vast universe. By accepting this belief the 'Karmas' (actions) will be performed for the world, but 'Yoga' (Nityayoga or eternal union) will be for himself i.e., he will realize his eternal union with God.

By the terms 'Vivasvate proktavān' the Lord wants to explain to the strivers that as the Sun in the solar system while performing his action by providing heat and light, remains unengrossed; similarly all the strivers should perform actions without attachment according to the available circumstances, (Gītā 3/19). They should also impart this teaching of Karmayoga to others for the public welfare by remaining unengrossed (without desire for fruit, without the sense of 'mine' and without attachment).

The sun-god was the king at the beginning of the creation. Lord Kṛṣṇa taught this imperishable Yoga to the sun-god. It means that Lord Kṛṣṇa was the first preceptor in the beginning and so has the Karmayoga been from times immemorial. It seems that the Lord tells Arjuna, "What teaching about 'Karmayoga' I am imparting to you is not new but eternal."

Question:—Why did the Lord teach this Yoga to the sun-god at the beginning of creation ?

Answer:—(1) The Lord taught it to him because He knew that he was a deserving candidate.

(2) The teaching is imparted to the first born as Brahmā, the creator created men and imparted teaching to them (Gītā 3/10) in order to inspire them to perform their duty. In the universe also the sun-god was the first born, and then the entire universe was born of the sun-god. The Lord taught this Yoga first of all the sun-god†. He meant to get it imparted through the sun-god to all his progeny by way of transmission in succession.

(3) The Sun is the eye of the entire creation. He imparts knowledge to all the people and when he rises they wake up and are engaged in their work. He sets an example to them for the performance of their duty. He has been called the soul of the entire

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* Lord Kṛṣṇa declares in the eighth chapter of the Gītā that the bright and the dark paths of the world are verily thought to be eternal (Gītā 8/26).

† In the scriptures the sun-god has been called 'Savitā' which means the creator. The western scholars also regard the Sun as the creator.

world*. Therefore, the teaching imparted to the sun-god will also be imparted to all beings. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa first of all taught this imperishable Yoga to the sun-god.

In fact this teaching imparted by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the manager of the world-theatre, to the sun-god, is a drama which has been staged by Him for the welfare of the world. As Lord Kṛṣṇa imparted teaching to Arjuna, the incarnation of Nara, the wise sage, for the welfare of the world, so did He teach this Yoga to the sun-god, the embodiment of knowledge, for the welfare of the entire world. This Yoga has done a lot of good to the world is doing now and will continue to do in future also.

'Vivasvānmanave prāha manurikṣvākave'bravīt'—Karmayoga is the main course of action for the householders. Out of celibacy, household life, the retired order and the renounced order— the four stages (orders) of life — household life is the most important because it is the householder that provides for the other stages of life. A householder, by performing his duty, can easily realize God. He need not change the stage (order) of life. Lord Kṛṣṇa mentioning the names of the kings such as the sun-god, Manu and Ikṣvāku wants to say that at the beginning of creation they as householders, having slain desires, realized God. Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna were also house holders. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa through Arjuna, teaches all the householders that they can realize God as house holders, without leading a secluded life as an ascetic, by performing their duty.

In spite of being a householder Arjuna holds that it is better to live in this world even by begging than to perform the savage deed of slaying the honoured teachers in the war (Gītā 2/5) viz., he thinks that the renounced order of life is superior to the household life. Therefore, the Lord says to him that he is a noble householder of the royal family. So performance of actions will lead him to salvation in the same way as renunciation leads an ascetic to salvation. Karmayoga consists in the utilization of the available circumstances. So Karmayoga (the Discipline of Action) can be followed by the people of every caste, creed, country and order of life.

The Lord has mentioned the names of the noble and influential kings of the past so that people may draw inspiration from them in order to perform their duty.

An Important Fact

Attachment (affinity) to actions and objects is the stumbling block to Karmayoga. When a householder renounces enjoying pleasures, his taste (relish) also comes to an end. When a person starts enjoying the pleasure, as while eating a sweet dish he relishes it very much. But as he goes on eating it, the taste diminishes and finally it comes to an end. But he commits an error that he does not make that distaste permanent by attaching importance to it. He regards this distaste as satisfaction (reward). But the fact is that that is the state of exhaustion in which he has no power of enjoying the pleasure.

The interest or desire which diminishes or perishes can't be of the self and therefore, It (the self) has no real affinity for the objects etc., which he desires or wants. Our real affinity is for God and therefore, the devotion while following the spiritual path for God-Realization, is ever enhanced. Even when he realizes God, his devotion is enhanced continuously and it is transformed to love (devotion). The self is also real, so no one has a liking to lose the self.

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* In the Mahābhārata it has been said addressing the sun-god, "O sun-god, you are the eye of the entire world and the soul of all beings. You are the birth-place and the inspirer of the good conduct of the followers of the path of action."

"You are the abode which should be attained by the Sānkhyayogīs. You are the base of Karmayogīs. You are the free gate way to salvation and you are the refuge for the salvation-seekers. You hold the entire world. This world is illumined by you. You sanctify it and it is preserved by you without any selfish motive (Vanaparva 3/36-38).

When actions, instruments (body, senses and mind etc.) and objects and materials are perishable, how can they bear imperishable fruit? How can the pleasure and satisfaction derived from the fruit of perishable things match the pleasure and satisfaction achieved on God-Realization? Therefore, a striver has to renounce his affinity for actions, instruments (such as body, senses and mind etc.) and objects. He can renounce this affinity only when he does nothing for himself, wants nothing for himself and regards nothing as his own. But he utilizes everything, by regarding it as the world's in rendering service to the world.

A Karmayogī performs actions scrupulously and lovingly without desire, attachment and feeling of mine. Desire, attachment and the sense of mine pollute actions while the scrupulous and loving nature purifies them. When actions are performed with desire, attachment and the sense of mine, objects are destroyed, the man has a down fall and the thoughts of the actions come to the mind time and again i.e., affinity for those actions continues. But when actions are performed scrupulously and lovingly, there is proper use of objects, the man has an upliftment and the thoughts of the actions don't come to the mind i.e., affinity for them is renounced. As soon as this affinity for actions is totally renounced, the striver realizes the self or God Who is ever realized.

Everyone can easily assume that whatever he possesses is not his own but is acquired, as he has acquired the body from parents, education and knowledge from preceptors and so on. It means that every man, even the richest one, has to depend on others in one way or the other. So it is his duty to render service to others with all his possessions because he has acquired them from others. This is known as Karmayoga. No one is dependent and unable to follow it (Karmayoga).

In fact duty is that which can be performed easily, which must be performed and by performing which a man certainly attains his aim. A man is not responsible for the performance of the action which he can't perform. And what is forbidden must not be done. When a person does not perform forbidden actions, he either does nothing or he performs the prescribed actions.

Duty is always performed for the welfare of others without expecting any reward. The actions with the expectation of reward should not be performed because they lead to bondage. But it does not mean that actions are performed without any aim. An action performed without any aim, can't be performed by anyone except an insane person. There is a vast difference between fruit (reward) and aim. Reward is perishable while aim is eternal. A man's aim is to attain God Who is ever attained and for which this human life has been bestowed upon him. He can't realize God without performing his duty in a disinterested manner. He can't perform his duty so long as he indulges in the reward for actions, heedlessness and indolence etc.

In fact, performance of duty needs no efforts, it's performed automatically. But when a man performs action for himself with egoism, attachment, desire and the sense of 'mine', it involves effort (strain). Therefore, the Lord declares, "The action which involves strain (effort) is said to be of the nature of passion" (Gītā 18/24).

As the Lord is ever engaged in the welfare of all beings, so is His power. As the news broadcast by a particular radio station is received by the same frequency in the radio-sets, similarly, when a Karmayogī performs all his actions for the welfare of the world without any selfish motive, his power is identified with the all-pervading benevolent power of God and his actions become uncommon. Thus because of the Lord's power, his actions are conducive to the welfare of the world. Therefore, there is neither any obstacle in the way of performing his duty nor does it involve any strain.

A man can perform his duty without depending on any person or circumstance. According to Karmayoga (the Discipline of

Action) giving help to others according to their need is service. When the engine of a car goes out of order and the driver of the car is trying to push it ahead, if someone helps him in the work, it is service. But he who looks for service, does not render real service but he performs actions only because by doing so his aim is mundane rather than spiritual. Service is rendered according to the available circumstances. Therefore, a Karmayogī neither changes circumstances nor does he seek them but utilizes them and utilization of the available circumstances is Karmayoga.

एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।
स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परंतप ॥ २ ॥

evaṁ paramparāprāptamimaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ
sa kāleneha mahatā yogo naṣṭaḥ paraṁtapa

This, handed down thus in regular succession, the royal sages knew. But through long lapse of time this Yoga was lost to the world, O oppressor of the foe (Arjuna). 2

Comment:

'Evaṁ paramparāprāptamimaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ'— The kings such as the sun-god, Manu and Ikṣvāku learnt this Karmayoga, followed it and also inspired their subjects to follow it. Thus it was handed down in regular succession in the family of the royal sages. This Karmayoga is a special art of the kings (the warrior class). Therefore, every member of the warrior class should know it. Similarly, the heads and leaders of the family, society, village and town etc., must also know it.

In ancient days the kings who knew Karmayoga administered the affairs of the state smoothly without being attached to the royal pleasures. They had a natural inclination to the welfare of the subjects. The great Saṁskṛta poet Kālidāsa writes about the kings of the solar dynasty:—

"Those kings levied a tax on their subjects in the same way as the Sun sucks water from the earth in order to supply it to the earth in the form of rain, a thousand times more than that he sucks."

It means that the tax realized from the subjects by kings was all used for the public welfare. In order to provide for their household expenses, they followed the occupation like farming. By following Karmayoga they were automatically endowed with singular knowledge and devotion. Therefore, even the great sages went to those kings in order to learn wisdom. Śrī Vedavyāsa's son named Śukadeva went to king Janaka in order to gain wisdom from him. In the fifth chapter of the Chāndojñopaniṣad it is mentioned that six sages together went to king Aśvapati in order to learn knowledge of Brahma, the Supreme.* Having mentioned the kings such as Janaka and others in the twentieth verse of the third chapter, and the sun-god, Manu and Ikṣvāku etc., here as Karmayogīs, Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to urge Arjuna that he should also perform actions (follow Karmayoga) as the ancestors did, in former times, because he is also a householder and a member of the warrior class (Gītā 4/15). Moreover, it is very easy for him to learn it because he belongs to the warrior class.

'Sa kāleneha mahatā yogo naṣṭaḥ' — God is eternal and the means — Karmayoga, Jñānayoga and Bhaktiyoga (Disciplines of Action, Knowledge and Devotion) etc., are also eternal as they

* King Aśvapati declares, "In my kingdom there is neither a thief, nor a miser, nor a drunkard, nor one who does not offer oblation to the consecrated fire, nor an ignorant person nor an adulterer; then how can there be a prostitute" (Chāndojñopaniṣad 5/11/5) ?

have been laid down by God. Therefore, they never cease to be. The Lord declares, "The real never ceases to be" (Gītā 2/16). They are eternal even if they are not practised. Therefore, here the term 'Naṣṭaḥ' means passing out of sight rather than out of existence.

In the first verse of this chapter this Yoga has been called imperishable. Therefore, if this term 'Naṣṭaḥ' is taken as 'out of existence' there will be a contradiction between the two statements. Moreover, the Lord again in the third verse declares that He is going to reveal the same ancient Yoga to Arjuna. It means that the texts and sages who possessed knowledge of this Yoga and who practised it had more or less disappeared from the earth.

The Lord declares that it was through long lapse of time that it disappeared because at the beginning of the creation the Lord taught it to the sun-god, then it was handed down in regular succession and the royal sages knew it, but due to the absence of the great spiritual souls possessed of the knowledge of this Yoga, it could not be handed down. So at present only a few people know and talk about it.

Though this principle was not practised, yet it did not cease to be, because without actions even other disciplines (such as of knowledge and devotion) cannot be constantly practised. A Jñānayogī through discrimination, by regarding the actions as 'Asat' (unreal), renounces his affinity for them while a Bhaktiyogī renounces affinity for them by surrendering them to God. No affinity, howsoever, is to be maintained. This is the principle of 'Karmayoga'. Therefore, a Jñānayogī and a Bhaktiyogī will have to adopt this principle of 'Karmayoga' even though they may not practise it. It means that at present though it has been lost, yet as a, principle it exists.

The fact is that in Karmayoga, Karma (actions) have not disappeared but 'Yoga' (union with God) has disappeared because a man performs actions with a selfish motive. It means that strivers have a firm belief that they will attain God through actions in the same way as they acquire the worldly things through actions. But they forget the reality that God is ever attained. Actions are ever performed for the world while 'Yoga' (union with God) is ever for one's ownself. Yoga is not attained through actions, it is self-evident.* Therefore, the assumption that this Yoga can be attained through action, means its disappearance.

This human body has been bestowed upon us so that we may practise Karmayoga i.e., serve others without any selfish motive. But we are so much absorbed in hankering after pleasures, prosperity and honour etc., that we don't pay heed to it. Thus it has been lost because we have forgotten it.

A man by rendering service can control not only birds, beasts and persons but also the gods, manes, sages, saints and even God. But having forgotten this service, he has been overpowered by pleasures which lead to hells and eighty-four lac forms of lives. This is called disappearance of Karmayoga.

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।
भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥ ३ ॥

sa evāyaṁ mayā te'dya yogaḥ proktaḥ purātanaḥ
bhakto'si me sakhā ceti rahasyaṁ hyetaduttamam

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* Yoga is attained by performing one's duty for the welfare of the world without any selfish motive. Action is performed in order to attain the state of actionlessness —'Action is said to be the means to attain to Yoga' (Gītā 6/3). When actions are performed with a selfish motive, the impetus for actions is enhanced. But when they are performed for the welfare of others the impetus for actions perishes. It means that nothing remains to be done by doing for others while actions are continuously performed when one does for himself. When nothing remains to be done, the striver realizes his union, which is self evident, with God.

This same ancient Yoga has been today declared to thee by Me; for thou art My devotee and My friend; and this is the supreme secret. 3

Comment:

'Bhakto'si me sakhā ceti'— Arjuna regarded Lord Kṛṣṇa as his companion (comrade) (Gītā 11/41-42) but now he has become His pupil (Gītā 2/7) i.e., before now he was a comrade-devotee, while now he has become disciple-devotee. An order can be given or a sermon can be preached only to a disciple rather than to a friend. The Lord preached His sermon only when Arjuna surrendered to Him i.e., took refuge in Him.

The secret, which is not disclosed even to the comrade, is revealed to a disciple who surrenders himself to his preceptor. Arjuna also says to Lord Kṛṣṇa, "I am Thy disciple, teach me, who have taken refuge in Thee." Therefore, the Lord reveals His secret to him.

It was because of Arjuna's reverence for Lord Kṛṣṇa that he instead of choosing the well equipped army chose unarmed Lord Kṛṣṇa alone (as his chariot driver).*

Common people regard the objects bestowed upon them by God as theirs (while in fact they are not theirs), but they don't regard the Lord (Who is actually theirs) as theirs. They instead of having an eye on the glorious Lord, have an eye on His glory. Having attached importance to the glory, their intellect becomes so dull that they don't even believe in His existence i.e., they don't even look towards Him. Some people adore Him in order to gain riches and glory etc. Though riches lie at the feet of devotees, yet true devotees don't adore Him for riches but they adore Him in order to attain Him. Those who hanker after riches are devotees (slaves) to riches while those who want to attain God, are His devotees. Arjuna having abandoned riches or glory (well armed Nārāyaṇī army), chose Lord Kṛṣṇa. Consequently, it was only he to whom the gospel of the Gītā was preached on the battle-field, though there were other great souls such as Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Yudhiṣṭhira etc., and finally he was able to regain the kingdom also.

'Sa evāyaṁ mayā te'dya yogaḥ proktaḥ purātanaḥ'— By these terms the Lord does not mean to say that He has given a full description of this Yoga but it means that whatsoever has been declared by Him is complete in itself. Further having answered Arjuna's question concerning His manifestation (incarnation), the Lord again starts the topic of Karmayoga.

The Lord declares that the same Karmayoga, which was taught to thesun-god at the beginning of the creation, has been taught to him. He declares that through long lapse of time this Yoga was lost to the world and so was He unmanifest. But He has manifested Himself and has also revealed this Yoga again. Therefore, the Karmayoga which has liberated people from bondage of actions from time immemorial will also liberate them today.

'Rahasyaṁ hyetaduttamam'—As the Lord teaches His supreme secret to Arjuna in the sixty-sixth verse of the eighteenth chapter by declaring, "Take refuge in Me alone; I shall liberate thee from all sins," here also He discloses His supreme secret by declaring, "I taught this imperishable Yoga to the sun-god at the beginning of creation and I am preaching the same to you today."

The Lord seems to say to Arjuna that though He, while playing the role of his chariot-driver, is obeying him, yet He is preaching to him the same Yoga which was taught to the sun-god at the beginning of creation. He is disclosing this secret to him because He is his devotee and also a loving friend.

Not to take of a common man, even a

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* Having heard the words of Lord Kṛṣṇa Arjuna, the son of Kuntī, chose unarmed Lord Kṛṣṇa his helper while he could have chosen the well armed Nārāyaṇī army consisting of 1,09,350 foot soldiers, 65,610 horses, 21,870 chariots and 21,870 elephants" (Mahābhārata, Udyogaparva 7/21).

striver pays attention to the preaching but he does not pay attention to the preacher. Having listened to this topic of Yoga and having studied it, a striver thinks over it but he does not think that the preacher is the omnipresent, Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. So the Lord by using the term 'Rahasyam (secret) introduces Himself and urges a striver to behold Him ever.

When the Lord declares that He preached the gospel of Yoga to the sun-god and is preaching the same to him, He means to say that He is the preacher or the preceptor of the entire humanity. As an actor while playing his role does not disclose his identity to the audience but discloses it to his bosom friend; the Lord also discloses before His devout devotee His identity. This is His supreme secret.

Karmayoga can also be regarded as the supreme secret. The supreme secret is that the actions which bind a man (the soul) may also liberate him from bondage. If actions are performed with a selfish motive by regarding the objects as one's own, they lead him to bondage. But if they are performed without any selfish motive for the welfare of others, they lead him to liberation (salvation). This Karmayoga can be practised independently in all the circumstances — favourable or unfavourable, riches or poverty, health or sickness etc.

While practising Karmayoga there are three important factors which need attention–

(1) The self is real (imperishable) while all the objects which are acquired are unreal (perishable). So how can the perishable be possessed by the imperishable ? 'So there is nothing mine.'

(2) 'I need nothing for myself' because the self lacks nothing. Moreover, how can the perishable objects be useful for the imperishable self ?

(3) 'Nothing is to be done for the self'. The first reason is that the self is a fragment of God Who is sentient while actions are insentient. The self is eternal while the actions and their fruits are transitory. Therefore, when anyone performs actions for the self, he (the self) is attached to those actions and their fruits. The actions and their fruits disappear but attachment to them continues, which is the cause of his birth and death. The Lord declares, "Attachment of the soul to the modes of nature is the cause of its births in good and evil wombs" (Gītā 13/21).

The second reason is that the responsibility for actions is his, who can perform them i.e., who possesses the resources to perform them and who wants to acquire something or the other. The self, being actionless, uniform, unchanging and perfect, can do nothing without accepting Its affinity for the body. Therefore, the self has nothing to do for it.

The third reason is that the self is real and perfect. It lacks nothing. The Lord declares, "The real never ceases to be" (Gītā 2/16). When It lacks nothing, there is no question for It to have any desire in order to acquire anything. Therefore, It has to do nothing for Itself.

In Karmayoga, Karmas (actions) are performed for the world while 'Yoga' (union with God) is for the self. When the actions are performed for one's ownself, one can't realize one's union with God. When the full flow of actions is towards the world, we realize God because the body, senses, mind, intellect, objects, riches and property etc., whatever we possess is not different from the world and is of the world. So they are to be used for rendering service to the world. Therefore, actions are to be performed for others in order to renounce affinity for the world in the form of objects and actions. This is known as Karmayoga. By this Karmayoga the attachment to action, the desire to acquire and live alive and the fear of death perish.

As all actions are performed in the sunlight but the sun remains detached, similarly, all actions are performed in the light of the self but the self remains detached because

the self is sentient and unchanging, while actions are insentient and changing. But when It by an error, accepts Its affinity in the least for the objects and actions i.e., regards them as Its and for it those actions bind It.

As the Sun performs its duty always very punctually and scrupulously, so does a Karmayogī perform his duty punctually and promptly.

If Karmayoga is rightly followed, the Karmayogī having the impression (influence) of Jñāna (Knowledge) attains knowledge, while with the impression of devotion attains devotion automatically. By following Karmayoga, a striver does the supreme good to the entire world whether other people perceive it or not, realize it or not He works as the fountain of inspiration for others and thus renders service to them.

A Vital Fact

The Lord while beginning the gospel of the Gītā has described from the eleventh verse to the thirtieth verse of the second chapter that every being realizes 'I am'. Even trees and mountains realize this fact, though they can't express it. It can be clearly seen among beasts and birds because they fight with each other as they realize their own existence; otherwise why should they fight? "I am distinct from the body and the world"— this is common experience of every human being. This is called discrimination. As far as a man is concerned, he has been specially endowed with discrimination by God. The pity is that he does not respect it and use it.

Senses, mind and intellect are the fragments of nature (Prakṛti) and so whatever is known through them is knowledge born of nature. The knowledge of the scriptures that is acquired through the senses, mind and intellect is also born of nature. The knowledge of God is far superior to this knowledge. Therefore, He can be known only by the knowledge of the self. When a man attaches importance to the knowledge of the self i.e., discrimination (wisdom) he develops power to know "Who I am', 'What is mine', 'What is sentient and what is insentient', 'What is God and what is nature (Prakṛti)' and so on. The same discrimination is applied for Karmayoga also—this is something vital.

In Karmayoga there are two important factors — (1) There is no doubt about one's own existence 'I am.' (2) Whatever objects we possess are not ours because they are acquired; they were neither ours in the past nor will remain ours in future. 'I' (the self) remains the same while these objects — body, senses, mind, intellect etc., are kaleidoscopic and perishable. As actions appear and disappear, so does their fruit. So actions and objects have their affinity for the world, not for the self. When this discrimination (wisdom) is aroused, desire perishes. When desire perishes, self-evident actionlessness is revealed i.e., Karmayoga is fully followed.

Discrimination (wisdom); is enveloped by desire (Gītā 3/38-39). A man cannot discriminate the right from the wrong because he hankers after worldly prosperity and pleasures by having a selfish motive. Thus he can't decide what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. He wants to find out the solution to the riddles of life by the body, senses, mind and intellect by changing the circumstances. But circumstances can't be changed by him. So he gets more and more entangled and can't decide his duty. But when his discrimination (wisdom) is aroused, he gets rid of the desire for pleasure, prosperity and selfishness; and then he clearly sees his duty and all entanglements perish.

Actions bear fruit in the form of outward circumstances such as riches and poverty, praise and blame, honour and dishonour, fame and defame, profit and loss, birth and death and health and sickness etc. He who becomes either happy in favourable circumstances or sad in unfavourable circumstances by accepting his affinity for them is a fool. Why? The reason is that he can't change the circumstances, but he can rise above them i.e., can remain detached from them by making proper use of them.

In favourable circumstances he should render service to others, while in unfavourable circumstances he should neither feel sad nor should he desire favourable circumstances. Such a striver easily gets liberated from the worldly bondage.

Undesirable circumstances are the fruit of sinful actions. So sinful actions which hurt others should not be performed even in dream. But in unfavourable circumstances which are the fruits of the sinful actions of the past, worry, sadness and fear etc., automatically come to his mind even though he does not commit new sins. A striver should not be attached to them. He should hold that they come to his mind in the same way as a cow whom he has sold visits his house because of her old habit. As the cow stops coming to his house and starts living in the new house, similarly, when the striver does not get attached to them, they stop coming to his mind.

Even when discrimination (wisdom) is not fully aroused, a Karmayogī has a determinate intellect that he has to renounce affinity for the perishable whīch is not his and he has to render service to the world without enjoying the worldly pleasures. It is because of his determinate intellect that he ceases attaching importance to the worldly pleasures. Then he can't be entangled in the mirage of pleasures. Thus his determinate intellect leads him to salvation. Good company and the study of the scriptures strengthen this determinate intellect. Therefore, every striver should have the determinate intellect that he has to attain salvation. Everyone is independent in having this determinate intellect without seeking the least help from anyone else.

Link:–The Lord declared that He had taught the imperishable Yoga to the sun-god etc., and He was teaching the same Yoga to him (Arjuna). Having heard His words, Arjuna had the curiosity to know how Lord Kṛṣṇa Who was sitting before him, had taught this Yoga to the sun-god at the beginning of creation. In order to get this point cleared Arjuna puts the question in the next verse.

अर्जुन उवाच

अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः ।
कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ।। ४ ।।

arjuna uvāca

aparaṁ bhavato janma paraṁ janma vivasvataḥ
kathametadvijānīyāṁ tvamādau proktavāniti

Arjuna said:

Later was Thy birth and earlier was the birth of Vivasvān (the sun-god). How then am I to understand that Thou didst declare it to him in the beginning ? 4

Comment:

'Aparaṁ bhavato janma paraṁ janma vivasvataḥ'— Arjuna asks Lord Kṛṣṇa that He was born in the house of Vasudeva a few years ago while Vivasvān (the sun-god) was born earlier at the beginning of creation. So how he could believe that He had taught this Yoga to the sun-god.

This question of Arjuna expresses his curiosity rather than argument or blame. He wants to hear from Lord Kṛṣṇa the secret of His Divine descent because only He is capable of revealing this secret to him.

'Kathametadvijānīyāṁ tvamādau proktavāniti'— Arjuna asks Lord Kṛṣṇa how he should understand that He had taught this Yoga at the beginning of creation;

because He was born later while the sun-god had been born earlier at the beginning of creation. As the Lord had recounted several generations of the sun-god, it proves that He had imparted this knowledge much earlier.

Link:–In response to Arjuna's question the Lord reveals His omniscience in order to manifest His Divine descent.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप॥ ५॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

bahūni me vyatītāni janmāni tava cārjuna
tānyahaṁ veda sarvāṇī na tvaṁ vettha paraṁtapa

The Blessed Lord said:

Many births of Mine have passed as well as of thine, O Arjuna; I know them all but thou knowest not, O scorcher of foes. 5

Comment:

[In the third verse the Lord said to Arjuna, "You are My devotee and My friend." So Arjuna put Him question quite frankly without any hesitation. Arjuna was curious to know the secret of His Divine descent. So the Lord reveals the secret. When a devotee has curiosity to know some secret, the saints also reveal it to him*. Saint Tulasīdāsa also declares in the Rāmacarita-mānasa "Sages don't conceal the secret when they come across a deserving hand" (1/110/1).]

'Bahūṅi me vyatītāni janmāni tava cārjuna'— Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that both of them have passed many births. But His manifestation (which will be described in the sixth verse) is different from his birth (which will be described in the nineteenth verse of the eighth chapter and the twenty-first and the twenty-sixth verses of the thirteenth chapter).

In the twelfth verse of the second chapter the Lord declared, "Never was there a time when I was not, or when you or these kings were not, nor will there ever be a time hereafter when we all shall cease to be." It means that God and His fragment, soul-both are beginningless and eternal.

'Tānyahaṁ veda sarvāṇī'— There are some Yogīs (ascetics) who by practising spiritual discipline possess an intuitional knowledge and come to know some of their previous births. Such Yogīs are called 'Yuñjāna yogīs'. On the other hand, there are other Yogīs who naturally know everything of the past births of all beings without practising any spiritual discipline. The Lord is such a 'Yuktayogī' Who knows the beings of the past, the present and the future (Gītā 7/26). Knowledge of God knows no bounds of past, present and future but it is constantly present. The Lord in spite of pervading everywhere, everything, every person and every circumstances etc., transcends them all.

[The Lord's statement, "I know them all" should thrill the strivers with delight because the Lord knows them and has an eye on them, whatsoever they are].

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* The saints remain concealed and don't reveal themselves. But they reveal themselves in the following three cases.
(i) When a devout devotee having great reverence for those saints, has curiosity to know them.
(ii) When a devout devotee's body is cast off.
(iii) When the saint goes to cast off his body.
In the second and the third cases the saints reveal themselves even to those devotees who have not so much of reverence for them, but they respect them from their heart and want to know them.

'Na tvaṁ vettha paraṁtapa' — A man does not possess the intuitional knowledge to know the previous births as he is attached to the perishable objects and persons etc. Similar was the case with Arjuna. He did not want to fight because his kith and kin would be killed. He declared in the thirty-third verse of the first chapter, "Those for whose sake we desire kingdom, enjoyments and pleasures, stand here in battle, renouncing their lives and riches." It shows that Arjuna desired kingdom, enjoyments and pleasures and so he did not know his previous births.

Accumulation of materials such as riches etc., for enjoyment and pleasure is called 'Parigraha'. When a person totally renounces this tendency to accumulation, he develops an intuition which enables him to know the previous births (Pātañjalayogadarśana 2/39).

The world (actions and objects) are kaleidoscopic and unreal. So it naturally suffers shortage while a man (the self) has no shortage at all. But when he assumes his affinity for the world, he feels shortage in him and wants to make up that shortage by having desires. In order to satisfy those desires he remains absorbed in different activities day and night like an unconscious man. Not to speak of the knowledge of several births, he does not even know his duty for the present i.e., what he should do and what he is doing.

Link:–The Lord in the preceding verse explained that He and Arjuna had passed through many births. Now in the next verse He explains the secret of his descent (incarnation).

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन्।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय संभवाम्यात्ममायया ॥ ६ ॥

ajo'pi sannavyayātmā bhūtānāmīśvaro'pi san
prakṛtiṁ svāmadhiṣṭhāya saṁbhavāmyātmamāyayā

Though I am unborn, of imperishable nature, the Lord of all beings, yet, governing My Nature (Prakṛti), I manifest Myself through My Yoga-māyā (divine potency). 6

Comment:

[This is the sixth verse and here in this verse there is description of six things — God is birthless, imperishable and the Lord of all begins, these three things pertaining to God*; Prakṛti (Nature) and Yogamāyā (the

* Lord Krsna has described in the Gītā that some people know Him as birthless, imperishable and the Lord of all beings while others don't know. The description is as follows —

1.(a) He who knows Him as birthless.

"He who knows Me as unborn and beginningless, the great Lord of the worlds, he among mortals, is undeluded and freed from all sins" (10/3).

(b) Those who don't know Him as birthless.

"This deluded world does not know Me, the unborn and imperishable" (7/25).

2.(a) Those who know him as imperishable.

"The great souls worship Me with a single mind, knowing Me as the imperishable source of beings" (9/13).

(b) Those who don't know Him as imperishable.

"The foolish don't know My higher, imperishable and supreme nature" (7/24).

3.(a) Those who know Him as the Lord of all beings.

"He who knows Me as the enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities, the great Lord of all the worlds, and the friend of all beings, attains peace" (5/29).

(b) Those who don't know Him the Lord.

"The deluded don't know My higher nature as the great Lord of all beings " (9/11).

divine potency), these two pertaining to His power; and the sixth one is his manifestation].

'Ajo' pi sannavyayātmā'—The Lord by this expression explains that, unlike common men, He is birthless and deathless. People take birth and die but He in spite of being birthless, manifests Himself and in spite of being imperishable, conceals Himself. Both manifestation and concealment are his unearthly sports (pastimes).

All beings were unmanifest before birth and will be unmanifest after death, they are manifest only in the middle (Gītā 2/28) while the Lord ever remains revealed like the Sun. As the Sun before rising and after setting remains the same, but it is not seen by all the beings all the time; so is the case with God Who ever remains revealed but seems to be manifested and concealed.

Other beings have to take birth under the subordination of nature (Prakṛti) according to the actions of the past while God manifests Himself of His own accord. Beings take birth grow, become old and die. Moreover, they have to undergo pleasures and pain. But that is not so in case of God. He does not undergo any change. He incarnates Himself as Lord Rāma or Kṛṣṇa etc., displays His sports as a child and an adolescent and then continues to be an adolesent possessing a healthy and handsome body without undergoing any change for hundreds of years. Therefore, the photos of God are prepared without beard and moustache (If a modern artist shows them, that is something different). Thus, unlike other men, God is neither born, nor does He undergo any modifications, nor does He die.

'Bhūtānāmīśvaro'pi san'—In spite of being the only Lord (great Lord) of all beings, God becomes a child when He incarnates Himself. But even then He possesses His Lordly nature — as Lord Kṛṣṇa killed ogress named Pūtanā of a very huge and horrible body when He was only six days old. He killed the demons— Śakaṭa, Tṛṇāvarta and Agha respectively when He was three months old, one year old and five years old. Thus in His childhood He killed several demons. He raised up Govardhana mountain on the tip of His finger when He was only seven years old.

In spite of being the Lord of all beings, when He manifests Himself, He does not hesitate even to perform the most menial job. This is His divine excellence. He works as the chariot-driver of Arjuna and obeys him, yet His Lordliness over Arjuna and other beings remains intact. That is why in spite of being a charioteer. He preaches him the gospel of the Gītā. Lord Rāma carries out the order of His father Daśaratha and goes into exile for fourteen years, yet His Lord liness over Daśaratha and other beings has not suffered in the least.

'Prakṛtiṁ svāmadhiṣṭhāya'—The Lord's pure nature (Prakṛti) is different from the three modes of nature—of goodness, of passion and of ignorance. This pure nature is His divine potency or transcendental power or delighting power. It is the embodiment of truth, consciousness and bliss. It is also called the sentient power or power of grace. The same divine or transcendental power is known as Śrī Rādhā* or Śrī Sītā. It is also called 'devotion' or the supreme knowledge by which God is attained.

Prakṛti (nature) is the Lord's power which is neither different from God nor is one with Him. For example fire has two kinds of power, the lighting and the burning. The former removes darkness as well as fear, while the latter is used for cooking and heating purposes. But both these powers are neither different from fire because they are nothing but fire, nor are they one with fire because they can be subdued by sacred formulas and herbs etc.

As the lighting and the burning powers of fire remain concealed in a match box, so does God's power remain incognito, though He pervades everywhere, all the time, all things and persons etc. The Lord manifests Himself by keeping His nature (Prakṛti) under control. As fire is not seen until it is

* The Lord manifests Himself with His pure nature (Prakṛti) i.e., His trancendental power which works for Him. Śrī Rādhā is His divine power and she has several female friends who are the embodiments of devotion and they bestow devotion upon His devotees. A person devoid of devotion can't know them. A devotee can know them only by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Rādhā.

revealed with its lighting and burning power, so is the Lord not beheld until He manifests Himself with His transcendental power even though He pervades everywhere all the time. Śrī Rādhā, Śrī Sītā and Śrī Rukmiṇī etc., are the Lord's own divine powers. He pervades everywhere universally, yet He does not perform any activity. Whatever He does, He does with His divine power. The drama that He stages with His divine power is so wonderful and uncommon that human beings having heard, sung and recollected it, are sanctified and they attain salvation.

The same divine power for the devotees, who are the worshippers of the attributless aspect of the Absolute, becomes the supreme knowledge of Brahma; while for the devotees who worship the Lord endowed with attributes, that power becomes devotion. When a devotee has an exclusive devotion for God, His divine power is revealed in him in the form of devotion. This devotion is so singular that it attracts God and He in spite of being formless has to reveal Himself endowed with form. This devotion is also bestowed upon devotees by Him.

The divine power of God in the form of devotion is perceived in two forms —disunion and union. It is by God's grace that there is disunion of a devotee from God, because in that state he becomes so much restless to meet Him that his attachment to the world is totally renounced and God manifests Himself. In the Discipline of Knowledge the divine power of God is revealed in the form of a keen desire. This keen desire compels a striver to know the real Essence. Then in the form of the supreme knowledge of Brahma, it roots out ignorance and illumines the real self. But the divine power of disunion is more powerful even than this. 'Where is God ?' 'What should I do to attain Him ?' 'Where should I go ?' When a devotee becomes restless in order to attain Him, his restlessness roots out all his sins and reveals Him before him. This restlessness is a better means of God-Realization than knowledge (wisdom or discrimination).

An Important fact

The Lord manifests Himself by keeping His nature (Prakṛti) under control and stages the drama of human life. As fire itself does nothing but its lighting power provides light and its burning power burns things, so does the Lord do nothing but it is His divine power which does everything. In the scriptures Sītā declares, "It is I, not Lord Rāma, who killed Rāvaṇa and other demons."

Like man and his power, God and His power are neither different from each other, nor are one. God can't separate His power from Him; so it is not different from Him. A man remains the same but his power changes, so it is not identical with him. Therefore, the philosophers have called it neither different nor one. This power is undescribable. The devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa call that power Śrījī (Rādhājī).

As a male and a female are two distinct entities, that way Lord Kṛṣṇa and Rādhājī are not two. Lord Kṛṣṇa and His power, Rādhājī in the Discipline of Knowledge become one while in the Discipline of Devotion become two. Lord Kṛṣṇa and Rādhājī become two* so that they may stage the drama of human life in order to exchange love and thrill the devotees with delight. When they become two, it is difficult to judge who is superior, and who is the lover and who is the beloved. Both of them appear uncommon and unique and they are attracted towards each other. They are pleased by seeing each other. Their pastime of love for each other is enhanced. This is called 'Rāsa' (sports).

The Lord's powers are infinite and limitless. His powers can be classified into two groups- pertaining to glory and pertaining to sweetness or love. By His majestic power He does wonderful sports and feats which none else can do. By this very power we find in Him excellence, eminence, singularity and divinity which are neither heard nor seen any where. While He exercises His sweet power, He

* Lord Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā are the oceans of savour, they are one but they have become two in order to stage the drama of human life (Śrī Rādhātāpanīyopaniṣad).

Himself is overwhelmed and forgets His Lordliness. He manifests Himself in the sweet mood, He appears to be very sweet and loving. He plays with cowherds like an ordinary cowherd. Similarly, he plays the role of a friend, a son and a husband and so on in the drama of life. Thus He thrills His devotees with delight with His sweetness and love by concealing His glory and grandeur.

The Lord reveals one of His powers at a time either that of glory or that of sweetness. When any doubt arises in the sentiment of sweetness, His power of glory is revealed. Lord Kṛṣṇa as a cowherd searches for calves. But when doubt arises about their whereabout, His power of glroy is revealed and He immediately comes to ḳnow that the cows have been taken by Brahmā, the creator.

The Lord is also the handsomest. So every being is naturally attracted towards Him. Seeing His handsomeness, the women of Mathurā say to each other.

"Lord Kṛṣṇa is the quintessence of handsomeness, no one can compete with Him in handsomeness in the entire universe, He is handsome even without any outward make up or ornamentation. No one is ever satisfied by seeing His countenance because His handsomeness ever remains fresh. All kinds of fame, beauty and glory depend upon His handsome appearance. It is very rare to behold Him. What a penance the cowherdesses performed that they ever behold His sweet countenance" (Śrī Madbhā. 10/44/14) !

Śrī Śukadevajī says:—

"O Parīkṣit ! All the citizens of Mathurā and other people of the country who were sitting on the dais, having seen Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, were so much pleased that their eyes and faces were glowing and they were filled with curiosity. They were not satisfied by enjoying their handsome faces through their eyes and it seemed as if they were drinking them through their eyes, licking them (with their tongues), smelling them (with their nose) and embracing them to their chests (Śrī. Madbhā. 10/43/20-21).

Having seen the handsomeness of Lord Rāma, king Janaka was beside himself with joy and declared that his dispassionate mind, having seen the sweet and handsome face of Lord Rāma, was so much enamoured as 'Cakora' (the Indian red-legged partridge) is enamoured of the moon (Mānasa 1/216/2).

Even the wild tribes such as Kola and Bhīla got enamoured of Lord Rāma's countenance.

They salute Lord Rāma, offer their presents to Him, behold Him with great affection. They are so much enamoured of Him that they remain standing here and there just like statues. Their bodies are thrilled and their eyes are flooded with tears of love' (Mānasa 2/135/3).

Not to talk of the Lord's devotees, even demons such as Khara-Dūṣaṇa who have enmity with Lord Rāma are wonderstruck with His handsomeness. So they say:— Out of all the snakes, demons, gods, men and ascetics whom we have seen, conquered and killed throughout our life, we have never seen such handsomeness (Mānasa 3/19/2).

'Saṁbhavāmyātmamāyayā'— The Lord does not reveal Himself to those who have a disinclination for Him and He appears to them as a common man. 'He stages the drama of His human life by keeping His divine potency under his control' (Śrīmadbhāgavata 10/29/1).

A devotee comes to know God while a non-believer does not know Him. The more a devotee is inclined towards Him, the more He reveals Himself to him.

The deluded people can't know Him because of their delusion and because of the divine potency of the Lord (Gītā 7/25). They can't understand the infinitude of God even when He manifests Himself before them as He manifested Himself in the form of Draupadī's unending saree yet because of their delusion Duḥśāsana, Duryodhana and Karṇa etc., could not know His manifestation.

If a person gets rid of his delusion, he can realize the self or God but can't behold Him*.

* It is not a rule that having realized the self a devotee may behold God. But having beheld God, he realizes the self. So Lord Rāma in the Rāmacaritamānasa declares:—
'The wonderful reward of My vision is that man easily realizes the Self' (3/36/5).

He can have a vision of the Lord only when He unveils Himself by removing the veil of His divine potency. A man can get rid of this delusion but it is beyond his power to do away with His divine potency. If he takes refuge in Him, He removes his delusion and also helps him to behold Him.

The different plays that the Lord stages, are staged with the help of His divine potency. So the people can see those plays and relish them. If they are staged without the help of the divine potency, no one can either see them or relish them.

An Important Fact Pertaining to Incarnation

The term 'Avatāra' means descent, one who has descended. The all-pervading Lord Who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss, by His special grace, manifests Himself as a common being. His peculiarity lies in being small in spite of being the supreme while it is otherwise with common men. It is his peculiarity that He in spite of being boundless, becomes very small. Though He upholds, infinite universes, yet He is known as 'Giradhārī' because he lifted mountain 'Govardhana'. It is nothing surprising in His case, in each of Whose pores infinite universes are established, to uphold a mountain. But it is His peculiarity in upholding it as well as in manifesting Himself as a common man.

He plays His part in the drama of human life as a common innocent boy. While playing He is defeated by other cowherds. Consequently, He has to carry the victor on His back.

The wise remain absorbed in the self but the devotees relish His pastimes. Even Brahmā, the leader of the wise, was wonderstruck by beholding His pastimes and so are the great saints and ascetics who can't understand the secret of His pastime and who have to remain dumb-founded. The Lord by His grace enables those devotees, who are exclusively devoted to Him, to know the secret of His pastime (Mānasa 2/127/2). Lord Kṛṣṇa while grazing cows kills huge bodied demons in no time. Despite being a boy His Lordliness remains the same.

As a learned teacher utters the letters 'a' 'b' 'c' etc., while teaching the alphabet to a boy by descending to the boy's standard; so does the Lord of infinite universes preach the gospel to us by becoming one of us, His wonderful and unearthly pastimes lead people to salvation whether they listen to them or study them or sing them.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord reveals the occasion of His manifestation.

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम्॥ ७॥

yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānirbhavati bhārata
abhyutthānamadharmasya tadātmānaṁ sṛjāmyaham

Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Arjuna, then I manifest Myself. 7

Comment:

'Yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir-bhavati bhārata abhyutthāna-madharmasya'— When the righteous, innocent, weak, pious and spiritual people are exploited by the unrighteous, cruel, strong, wicked and mundane people and when moral values are lost and immorality prevails — that state is the state of a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness.

The terms 'Yadā yadā' (whenever) show that God manifests Himself when ever there is need for His manifestation. Example —when the sea was churned, God in the form of unconquered Lord Viṣṇu churned the sea, as divine Tortoise upheld the Mandarācala (mountain), pressed it hard as the being with a thousand arms, and as the bewitching

woman distributed the nectar among the gods. Thus God manifested Himself in different forms at a time.

The root of the decline of righteousness and the rise of unrighteousness is attraction towards the perishable. As the body of a child is inherited from the parents' bodies, so is the universe created by nature (Prakṛti) and God. Out of them nature and its evolute, the world ever undergo modifications while God and His fragment, the soul, ever remain uniform without the least modification. When a man has a desire to derive pleasure out of the mundane objects, he starts having a downfall. The more he is attached to the worldly pleasures and prosperity, the more rise there is of unrighteousness. The more this unrighteousness rises, the more vices such as sins, strifes and riots etc., prevail in the society.

There is a decline of righteousness from the Satya age to Tretā age, Dvāpara age and Kali age respectively. In the Satya age righteousness flourishes. In Tretā age the decline begins, in Dvāpara age there is a rapid decline and in Kali age unrighteousness prevails. Then God manifests Himself for the establishment of righteousness.

'Tadātmānaṁ sṛjāmyaham'— Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, then the Lord manifests Himself for the destruction of unrighteousness and for the establishment of righteousness.

When there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, people are inclined to unrighteousness which leads them to a downfall. The Lord is the disinterested friend of all beings. So He manifests Himself in order to check their downfall.

When actions are performed with a selfish motive i.e., for reward, there is a decline of righteousness; and when a man having deviated from his duty performs forbidden actions, there is rise of unrighteousness. It is desire which is the root of all unrighteousness, sins and injustice etc., (Gītā 3/37). Therefore, God manifests Himself in order to root out this desire and propagate the principle of the performance of actions without expectation of any reward.

Here a doubt may arise why at present in the wretched Kali age God does not manifest Himself when there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness. The clarification is that the time is yet not ripe. During the Tretā age the demons having killed sages piled up their bones. But at present the righteous persons are leading a pious and peaceful life and no body kills them. Secondly, when there is decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, by God's order, saints come to the earth and true strivers are revealed and both of them establish righteousness. Sometimes the liberated souls, who have realized God, also come to the earth to help the people to attain salvation, as the representative of God. Where there are such strivers and saints, there is neither so much decline of righteousness, nor so much rise of unrighteousness, as is at other places where there are neither strivers nor saints.

When people don't follow the teachings of strivers and saints but start to kill them, and when there are left only a few righteous persons to propagate righteousness, and there is a decline of righteousness, then God manifests Himself.

Link:–Having described the occasion of His manifestation in the preceding verse, the Lord now reveals the aim of His manifestation, in the next verse.

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे॥ ८॥

paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ vināśāya ca duṣkṛitām
dharmasaṁsthāpanārthāya saṁbhavāmi yuge yuge

For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I am born from age to age. 8

Comment:

'Paritrāṇāya sādhūnām'— God manifests Himself in order to protect the good because they destroy unrighteousness and propagate righteousness.

The term 'Sādhūnām' has been used for those good men who naturally are inclined towards the good of others, who remember and chant the name, form, qualities, glories and pastimes etc., of God, who propagate them among people and who depend on God.

He, whose only aim is God-Realization, is a good person while he who hankers after the worldly pleasures and prosperity is not a good person.

When a man attaches importance to the perishable world, desires are born. As desires increase, goodness disappears, but when desires are renounced, goodness appears, because desire is the root of evil. Goodness leads to salvation of one's own self and to the welfare of others.

Good people are even engrossed in the good of beasts, birds, trees, mountains, men, gods, manes and sages etc., through their thoughts and deeds. In the Rāmacarita-mānasa the citizens of Ayodhyā say to Lord Rāma, "O foes of demons, in the world there are only two who do good to others without any selfish motive, they are You and Your devotees" (7/47/3).

If people come to know their thoughts and feelings, they will ever bow to them. But if they know the thoughts and feelings of the wicked, there will be quarrels and strifes.

Here a doubt may arise why such people are seen suffering when God protects them. The clarification is that the Lord protects their good feelings, rather than their bodies, riches, honour and fame etc. The reason is that those good people don't attach importance to the mundane objects because by doing so they become bad. The Lord also does not attach importance to them.

Devotees never desire worldly objects. They are very happy in unfavourable circumstances because they lead them to spiritual upliftment. Devotion develops in unfavourable circumstances. It is so because their attachment, which causes their downfall, is renounced. Therefore, the Lord protects the good by creating unfavourable circumstances for them.

'Vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām'—The wicked propagate unrighteousness and destroy righteousness. So the Lord manifests Himself for their destruction.

Those who because of so many desires remain absorbed in vices such as falsehood, fraud, deception and dishonesty etc., those who exploit the virtuous and good persons; those who remain engaged in doing evil to others; those who don't know what ought to be done and what ought not to be done; those who always condemn God and the scriptures — such persons of demoniac nature have been called wicked. The Lord manifests Himself for the destruction of such wicked men.

Question:—The Lord declares that He is the same to all beings and there is none hateful to Him (Gītā 9/29); then why does He destroy the wicked ?

Answer:—As the Lord is the disinterested friend of all beings, no one is hateful to Him. But he who is an enemy to His devotees, is His enemy. In the Rāmacarita-mānasa it is declared, "He who offends a devotee of Lord Rāma, has to burn in the Lord's fire of anger" (2/218/2-3).

God is called a devotee to His devotees (Śrīmadbhāgavata 10/86/59). So the wicked who offend His devotees are destroyed by Him. Devotees destroy sins while God destroys sinners.

As His grace is revealed in protecting the good, so is His grace revealed in destroying

the wicked because He does evil to none (2/183/3). Moreover He purifies them by destroying them.

Saints also establish righteousness but they don't destroy the wicked. Destruction of the wicked is brought about by the Lord in the same way, as an ordinary injury may be dressed by the compounder but a major operation is performed only by the civil surgeon.

Both the parents are equally interested in the welfare of their son. When he does not pay attention to his studies and indulges in mischief, both of them want to set him right. The father beats him so that he may give up his bad habit. The mother checks the father from beating him. Being faithful it is her duty to follow her husband' s foot steps. So should she also start beating the boy because she is faithful ? No. It is her duty to protect the boy otherwise he may receive a severe beating. The father also does not want to give him a good beating but he wants the son to get rid of his bad habit. Similarly, God is like the father while saints are like the mother. First the Lord and saints urge people to give up their wickedness. But when they don't mend their ways, God has to manifest Himself for their destruction. If they give up their wickedness, there is no need to destroy them.

The attributeless Absolute is not antagonistic to Nature, illusion and ignorance, it rather inspires and nourishes them. God whether He is attributeless or is endowed with attributes, fosters all beings equally without any distinction. Even the earth, created by Him, provides room equally to everyone whether he is virtuous or wicked. Similarly, all of them are equally provided with the necessities of life such as food, water, air and sunlight. Thus the Lord is the ocean of generosity and equanmity even to the vilest person. If a person just thinks of His generosity, he gets thrilled with delights and starts bowing to Him.

The Lord is not opposed to the wicked but He is opposed to their wicked actions because those actions are injurious to the world as well as to them. The Lord is the disinterested friend of all beings. Therefore, He destroys the wicked in order to do good to the world as well as to those wicked persons. How generous He is that having killed those wicked persons He sends them to His own abode !

Now a question may arise whether the Lord Himself will have to come to kill us if we go on committing sins. If it is so, we shall attain salvation easily, otherwise we shall have to control our senses, mind etc., and inculcate virtues and practise spiritual discipline. The answer is that the Lord destroys only those wicked who can't be destroyed by anyone else. Secondly, performance of good actions will lead us to virtues, which will pave the way to salvation. But if we are killed by anyone else or die a natural death while performing sinful actions, what will be the consequences ? How will our desire of being killed by the Lord be fulfilled ? Therefore, sinful actions should not be performed at all.

'Dharmasaṁsthāpanārthāya'— Establishment of righteousness consists in preaching and propagating the selfless performance of actions, because unrighteousness propagates due to the performance of action with a selfish motive and due to the attachment to the unreal. Therefore, the Lord manifests Himself in order to propagate the performance of selfless actions through His deeds. When this sort of feeling is propagated, righteousness is naturally established.

The Lord is the abode of righteousness (Gītā 14/27). So He manifests Himself in order to establish righteousness well. In fact righteousness never perishes, it only declines. When ever there is the decline of righteousness, the Lord reestablishes it (Gītā 4/1-3).

'Saṁbhavāmi yuge yuge'— The Lord manifests Himself from age to age. He also descends to the mortal world several times in the same age according to the need of the hour. He incarnates Himself as 'Kāraka Puruṣas' as well as saints. The incarnations of the Lord and His 'Kāraka Puruṣas' (representatives) are casual or occasional while the saints are regularly born.

Now a doubt may arise whether the omnipotent Lord can't protect the good,

destroy the wicked and establish righteousness without manifesting Himself. The clarification is that He can do wonders suddenly without His manifestation also and goes on doing so also, yet He manifests Himself in order to shower His special grace on beings for their welfare.* During His incarnation His vision, touch, talk etc., and later on the practice of hearing, thinking, chanting and following His sports, lead people to salvation.

The Lord comes to the mortal world in different incarnations according to the need of the hour. He remains perfect during all the incarnations.

Though there is nothing that should be done by Him, nor is there anything unattained that should be attained (Gītā 3/22), yet He performs all actions by manifesting Himself from time to time only for the welfare of the world. Therefore, human beings should also perform their duty for the welfare of others.

In response to Arjuna's question which he put in the fourth verse, the Lord explains the three main differences between men's births and His births (manifestations):—

(1) Difference in knowledge:— Many birhts of men as well as of the Lord have passed. Men don't know them all, the Lord knows them.

(2) Difference in birth:— Men have to take birth under the subordination of nature (Prakṛti) in order to reap the fruits of their virtuous and evil actions and then to realize God, while God manifests Himself of His own accord, governing His nature (Prakṛti) through His divine potency (4/6).

(3) Difference in actions:— Men perform actions in order to satisfy their desires, though it is not the aim of human life, while the Lord works only in order to enable beings to attain salvation (4/7-8).

Link:–In response to the question put in the fourth verse by Arjuna, the Lord started describing the divine character of His birth. Now in the next verse He, of His own accord, explains the merit of knowing the divine character of His birth as well as actions in order to explain the performance of actions without expectation of fruit (Karmayoga).

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥ ९ ॥

janma karma ca me divyamevaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punarjanma naiti māmeti so'rjuna

He who thus knows, in their true nature., My divine birth and action, having abandoned the body is not born again; he comes to Me, O Arjuna.9

Comment:

'Janma karma ca me divyam'—The Lord is beyond birth and death, He is birthless and imperishable. His manifestation in the human body is not like the birth of common men. He manifests Himself of His own accord† in order to stage the drama of human life for the welfare of beings.

* The Lord mainfests Himself as a human being in order to shower His special grace on beings and He stages the drama of human life in such a manner that it conduces them to be devoted to Him (Mānasa 1/192).

† Uddhava tells Lord Krsna, "You are the Supreme beyond Nature (Prakrti) and You are Brahma, the very embodiment of knowledge; even then You have manifested Yourself as a human being of Your own accord" (Śrīmadbhā. 11/11/28).

The Form (Body) of the Lord, unlike other beings, is not made of flesh and blood. The bodies of beings are full of virtues and vices. They are transitory, sick, mundane, changing, material and are born of ovum and semen, while the Form of the Lord is free from virtues and vices. It is eternal, healthy, spiritual, unchanging, divine and is revealed. The bodies of the gods are also divine but the Form of the Lord is far superior even to those of the gods and even the gods are ever eager to see this Form (Gītā 11/52).

When the Lord descended to this mortal world as Lord Rāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa mother Kausalyā and Devakī did not give birth to Them. First He revealed to them His four armed divine Form with conch, disc, mace and lotus and then staged the drama of a child when the mother requested Him to conceal that divine Form. The description has been very clearly given in the Rāmacaritamānasa 1/192 as well as Śrīmadbhāgavata 10/3/30 and 10/3/46.

When Lord Rāma went to His Abode, He unlike common men, disappeared from this mortal world with His body (Form), His body was not left on the earth. There is description in the Rāmāyaṇa by Vālmīki that having heard the words of Brahmā, the creator, very wise Lord Rāma, having resolved, entered the splendour of Lord Viṣṇu with His three brothers including His Form. As far as Lord Kṛṣṇa is concerned, the same fact is mentioned about Him in Śrīmadbhāgavata that He also went to His Abode with His Form (11/31/6).

The same sort of description is available in Rāmacaritamānasa, when sage Vālmīki says to Lord Rāma that His Form is divine and unaltered but only a deserving hand knows the reality about Him when He manifests Himself as a human being for protecting saints and gods and preaches and acts as a worldly king.

Once sages Sanaka etc., were going to the Abode of Lord Viṣṇu. The gate-keeper would not let them go in. They cursed the gate-keeper. Knowing that His gate-keeper had insulted the sages, Lord Viṣṇu Himself came to the gate. Having a vision of the Lord and receiving the divine smell of basil leaves and shoots while bowing to Him, their bodies and hearts were thrilled and agitated, though such wise sages ever remain established in the imperishable Lord (Śrīmadbhā. 3/15/43). As the Lord's lotus feet's smell is divine, His clothes, ornaments and weapons etc., are also divine, sentient and very singular.

Having heard, studied and recollected the pastimes of the Lord, people's hearts are purified and they get rid of ignorance— this is the divine character of His actions. Lord Śaṅkara, Brahmā, the creator, sages such as Sanaka etc., divine sage, Nārada etc., who are the embodiments of knowledge having sung and heard His divine pastimes, get absorbed in them. The man who visits the places, where the Lord staged the drama of His human life, with reverence and faith and resides there, attains salvation. It means that the Lord manifests Himself and carries on His pastimes in order to enable the people to attain salvation. Therefore, people attain their aim by reading, hearing and thinking of His divine pastimes.

In the fourth verse Arjuna put the question to the Lord pertaining to His birth, but here the Lord starts describing his action also of his own accord. By doing so it seems as if the Lord wants to emphasize the fact that a man's actions can also be divine, though his birth can't be divine, because the human life has been bestowed upon him only to perform such actions. Actions are divine when they are free from desire for reward, attachment and the sense of 'mine.' Divine actions lead to liberation from the bondage of present as well as past actions and they naturally do good to others.

In fact actions become impure, when a man accepts his affinity for the perishable objects; and they lead the man to bondage. This affinity makes not only actions but also objects and mind impure. But as soon as this affinity is renounced, all the three become pure. It is affinity for the perishable which is the main obstacle to salvation

'Evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ' —God in spite of being birthless and imperishable and the Lord of all beings, manifests Himself,

of His own accord, by keeping His nature (Prakṛti) under control for the welfare of all beings. He who knows (assumes) this fact, knows the divine nature of the births of the Lord.

Though all actions are performed by Him yet He is the non-doer i.e., He has no pride of doership (Gītā 4/13), nor does He desire the fruit of actions (Gītā 4/14). He who knows this fact, knows the divine nature of the Lord's actions.

As the Lord manifests Himself for the welfare of the entire creation and as He remains detached from actions, similarly, those people who live for the welfare of the world and remain detached from actions, know the divine nature of His births (manifestations) and actions.

'Tyaktvā deham punarjanma naiti'— There is nothing in the three worlds that is to be done by the Lord, nor is there anything unattained that should be attained by Him (Gītā 3/22), yet He manifests Himself in this mortal world by His grace to inspire beings to attain salvation. He carries on His wonderful pastimes also for the same purpose. When a person recites, hears, reads or thinks of his pastimes, he is connected with the Lord. When he is connected with the Lord, his connection with the world is renounced. When this connection with the world is renounced, he is not reborn i.e., he is liberated from the bondage of birth and death.

In fact it is not the actions but desire which binds a man and this desire is man-made. In order to satisfy his desire he performs actions with a selfish motive, being attached to them and so they bind him. As the desire is enhanced, he is inclined to sinful actions, which lead him to his birth in evil wombs and also lead him to hells. But when he performs actions without a selfish motive for the welfare of others, his actions become divine and uncommon, they don't lead him to bondage and he is not reborn.

'Māmeti so'rjuna'—When a man assumes his affinity for the perishable actions, the ever attained Lord seems to be unattained to him. But when actions are performed without expecting any reward, for the welfare of others, their flow is towards the world and the ever-attained Lord is realized.

It is because of the Lord's divine nature that He descends to this mortal world in order to shower His grace upon beings. Those who know this fact become His devotees and then remain absorbed only in His adoration or devotion (Mānasa 5/34/2). This devotion leads to salvation. Similarly, when a man knows the divine nature of His actions, his actions also become divine viz., pure and then they lead him as well as to others to God-Realization (salvation) because he renounces his affinity for the world. It is the affinity which is an obstacle to salvation or God-Realization.

A Vital fact

Actions are transitory and perishable and so is their fruit while the self (soul) is uniform and eternal. Therefore, in fact the self has no affinity for actions, the affinity is merely assumed. While performing actions if a man realizes that he has no affinity for them, his actions become divine. This is the reality about actions and this is Karmayoga.

When a man identifies himself with active Nature (Prakṛti), it gives an impetus to action. He can never remain even a moment without performing actions (Gītā 3/5). He thinks that as worldly objects are acquired by performing actions, so can the Lord be realized through them. But it is an error of judgement because only the perishable objects, rather than imperishable Lord, can be acquired through perishable actions. The imperishable Lord can be attained by renouncing affinity for actions. This affinity for actions can be renounced more easily through the Discipline of Action than through the Discipline of Knowledge. It is so because when all actions with gross, subtle and causal bodies are performed for the welfare of the world without any selfish motive, their flow is towards the world and so affinity for actions is renounced.

The Lord by using the terms 'Māmeti' wants to explain that He Whom a man wants to

attain through the performance of actions is ever attained. What efforts are required to attain Him who is ever attained and ever-existent? Whatever was not attained is attained by efforts.?

There are two things— origin and discovery. Originated is that which has no independent existence, which was absent in the beginning and perishes in the end. Discovered is that which has a separate existence for ever. But He seems to be concealed when importance is attached to the mundane actions and objects. When he uses actions and objects in rendering service to others, his affinity for actions and objects is automatically renounced and ever-attained God is revealed. This is called discovery of the ever attained.

Heedlessness and indolence in the performance of actions and the desire for fruit of actions are the main stumbling blocks to God-Realization. If actions are performed without the desire for fruit in rendering service to others, the affinity for actions is renounced and we realize our affinity for God which is naturally eternal.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse describes the traits of those devotees who know the divine nature of His birth and action.

वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।
बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥ १० ॥

vītarāgabhayakrodhā manmayā māmupāśritāḥ
bahavo jñānatapasā pūtā madbhāvamāgatāḥ

Freed from attachment, fear and anger, absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, purified by the penance of knowledge, many have attained to My Being. 10

Comment:

'Vītarāgabhayakrodhāḥ'— When a man has a disinclination for God, he gets attached to the perishable objects. It is because of his attachment that he has the sense of 'mine' for the objects acquired and a desire for those unacquired. He has a greed to maintain the acquired objects and gets angry with those who are obstacles to the acquirement of those objects. If the persons, who are obstacles are stronger than he, it causes fear. Thus attachment to the perishable objects gives birth to fear, anger, greed, desire and feeling of 'mine' and such other vices. If attachment is renounced, all these vices perish. If instead of regarding the objects as ours and for us, we regard them as others' and for others and render service to others with them, attachment perishes because in fact we have no affinity for objects and actions.

The Lord without any selfish motive descends to the mortal world in order to inspire beings to attain salvation because He is the disinterested friend of all beings. When a man has a firm belief that He is the disinterested friend of all beings, he is attracted towards Him. The attraction for Him wipes out attraction (attachment) for the world. For example, in childhood children play the game of marbles and have attraction for them. They also quarrel for their possessions. But when they grow old, they instead of having attraction for marbles or toys, have attraction for money. But when they get inclined towards God, they have no attraction for mundane objects and riches etc. Their attachment to them is renounced. As soon as it is renounced, fear and anger are rooted out because both of them depend on attachment.

'Manmayā'—When a man knows the truth about the divine nature of the Lord's birth and actions, He becomes dear to him. So he takes refuge in Him and gets absorbed in Him.

Those who have attraction for mundane pleasures get absorbed in the desires for pleasures (Gītā 2/43) while those who have attraction for God ever remain absorbed in Him (Nārada-Bhaktisūtra 70). They lose their

individuality because of their exclusive devotion to Him and identify themselves with Him.*

'Māmupāśritāḥ'— The expression 'Vītarāgabhayakrodhāḥ' denotes total severance of connection with the world while this expression denotes that a striver taking refuge in Him gets absorbed in Him.

A man has to depend upon some one or the other. He (the soul) in spite of being a fragment of God, having a disinclination for Him, depends on the perishable objects such a riches etc., which lead to his downfall. Not only this, but even if he depends, on intellect in order to perform virtuous actions, on the practice of spiritual discipline and on renunciation of pleasure and prosperity, he can't realize God quickly. So long as he (the self) does not depend on God, his dependence does not end and he has to suffer pain.

A man is attracted towards the loving persons and objects such as wife and son etc., while he depends on his superiors such as parents and elders etc. But a devotee of the Lord has attraction for Him and also depends on Him because for him He is the most loving and superior to all.

'Bahavo jñānatapasā pūtā mad-bhāvamāgatāḥ'—Though a man is purified through the Discipline of Knowledge also, yet here the term 'Jñāna' (knowledge) has been used for knowing the reality about the divine nature of the Lord's birth and action. This knowledge purifies the man because the Lord is the purest of the pure. The soul being a fragment of God is naturally pure. In the Mānasa it is declared, "The soul is sentient, pure and naturally a heap of joy" (7/117/1). By attaching importance to the perishable and by having the feeling of 'mine' with them, he (the soul) has become impure. When a man knows reality about the divine birth and divine actions of God, his attraction for the perishable and his feeling of 'mine' for them totally perish and then all impurity comes to an end and he becomes very pure.

This is the subject of Karmayoga. So the term 'Jñāna' can stand for knowledge of Karmayoga by which all the acquired things such as the body senses, mind, intellect rank, ability, authority, riches and property etc., are not one's own and for one's own self but are of the world and for the world. Why ? The reason is that he (the self) is eternal; so how can the perishable things stay with the imperishable soul and be useful for It ? The perishable things such as the body etc., were neither with us before, nor will remain with us after death and at present also they are perishing every moment. We have a right to make the proper use of the acquired objects rather than to lay claim to them. These things (objects) belong to the world and so they should be used in rendering service to the world, this is their proper use. But if anyone regards them as his or for him, it is bondage or impurity for him.

When a person does not regard the perishable things as his or for him, it means that he performs the penance of knowledge which purifies him. The penance of knowledge is superior to all other penances. Through this penance the assumed affinity for the insentient (Matter) is renounced totally. So long as a man assumes his affinity for the insentient, he is not so easily purified by any other penance as he is purified by this penance of knowledge by which his affinity for the Matter is renounced. Being purified by the penance of knowledge a man attains to His Being Which is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. It means that as the Lord is eternal, he also resides in Him constantly; as the Lord is unconnected and unaltered, he also remains unconnected and unaltered and as nothing remains to be done by God, nothing remains to be done by him. A man through the Discipline of Knowledge also attains to His Being (Gītā 14/19).

Many devotees having been purified by the penance of knowledge have attained Him. So strivers at present also being purified by the penance of knowledge should attain Him. Everyone is independent in attaining Him because this human body has been bestowed upon them only to attain God.

* Cowherdesses became just like their loving Lord Krsna in gait and manners, laughter and merriment, glance, speech, inclination and facial expression etc. They having forgotten themselves totally became the embodiment of Lord Krsna and copying His pastime began to utter, "I am no one else but Lord Krsna (Śrīmadbhā. 10/30/3).

Link:–The devotees attain Him. Now the question arises how they attain Him. The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम्।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ ११ ॥

ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁstathaiva bhajāmyaham
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ

O Pārtha ! As devotees approach Me, so do I accept them; for all men follow My path in everyway. 11

Comment:

'Ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁs-tathaiva bhajāmyaham'—Howsoever devotees seek Him, so does He meet them and grant them their hearts' desires. He reveals Himself before a devotee in the same form in which he thinks of Him. If a devotee thinks of Him as his preceptor He becomes an excellent preceptor. Similarly, He becomes a worthy father or mother or son or brother or friend or even an obedient servant according to the desire of the devotee. If a devotee feels restless without God, God also becomes restless without His devotee.

Arjuna regarded Lord Kṛṣṇa as his friend and wanted to make Him his chariot driver. Therefore, He became his chariot driver. Sage Viśvāmitra treated Him as a disciple; so He became his disciple. Therefore, with whatever sentiment devotees seek Him, He reciprocates the same sentiment. The Lord of infinite worlds reciprocates the sentiments of His own created common beings. How generous affectionate and merciful He is !

This topic reveals that the Lord manifests Himself for the sake of His devotees. He has to descend to the earth according to the sentiment of His devotees. It is mentioned in the Upaniṣad, 'The Lord felt lonely' (Bṛhadāraṇyaka 1/4/3). So He manifested Himself in different forms and started His sports. Similarly, when devotees have a desire to take part in sports in the company of the Lord, He manifests Himself in order to take part in sports. When a devotee cannot bear separation from God, God also cannot bear separation form him.

Though the terms 'Yathā' (in whatever way) and 'Tathā' (so) explains that in whatever way a devotee seeks Him, He reciprocates his sentiments, yet there is a great difference in their strides. If a devotee takes one stride towards God, God will take hundreds of strides to meet him. The Lord is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. Moreover, He is His devotee's supreme disinterested friend and is true to His resolve. A devotee should apply his full power to attain Him, then the Lord is attained through His limitless power.

The striver himself creates obstacle in God-Realization because he does not apply his intellect, resources, time and power etc., to the full extent in order to attain Him. If he without regarding them as his own, utilizes them fully for God-Realization, he may realize Him soon. Actually, they are the Lord's because they have been bestowed upon him by Him. This feeling of 'mine' is the main obstacle to God-Realization. He himself is also a fragment of God. But he considers him separate from God while the Lord does not think so.

In fact a striver can't develop devotion to God through the performance of actions. Devotion is automatically bestowed upon the devotee who takes refuge in Him. The sentiment of refuge (surrender) is the best sentiment out of all the other sentiments such as of service, of friendship, of affection and of sweet love etc. The Lord seems to declare that if a devotee offers his possessions to Him, He offers His possessions to the devotee; and if he offers himself to Him, He offers Himself to him. What an easy and economic transaction God-Realization is !

When a devotee surrenders himself at His feet, He does not even remember his sins of the

past. He thinks of his present emotions hundreds of times (Mānasa 1/29/3).

In this (eleventh) verse there is no description of scriptural subjects such as dualism or non-dualism, the Lord endowed with attributes or attributeless or different kinds of salvation etc. But here is the description of the feeling of 'mine' with God. 'Only God is mine and I am only God's' — this feeling of 'mine' with God enables a striver to attain Him quickly and easily. Therefore, a striver should accept his affinity for God, even if he does not understand it. By doing so he will realize his affinity for Him because it is real.

Question:—The Lord reciprocates the same sentiment with which a devotee seeks Him. If a devotees approaches Him with the sentiment of hatred or enmity etc., will the Lord reciprocate the same ?

Answer:—Here is the topic of surrender (refuge) to Him rather than of hatred or enmity. So no such question should arise. Even then if we think over the question seriously, we come to know that the purpose of the Lord in reciprocating the same sentiment to the person concerned, is to inspire him to salvation.* The Lord is the disinterested friend of all beings (Gītā 5/29). Therefore, he ever thinks of their welfare and does accordingly. He does the same even for those who have feelings of hatred and enmity for Him. When Lord Rāma sends Aṅgada as a messenger to the court of Rāvaṇa, He urges him to convey the message in such a way that His purpose may be served and it may be for his (Rāvana's) welfare (Mānasa 6/17/4).

Not only the Lord but His devotees are also the disinterested friends of all beings (Śrīmad-bhāgavata 3/25/21). When even a devotee can't harm anyone, how can the Lord, Who is the most merciful disinterested friend of all beings, harm anyone ? A person may have affinity for Him with any sentiment, He inspires him to salvation only. As bath in the Ganges, both in winter and summer is rewarding, but while bathing in winter a man feels cold while in summer he feels refreshed. Similarly, those devotees who worship Him with devotion attain eternal bliss but that bliss is not attained by those who have feelings of hatred and enmity for Him.

'Mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ'— Whatsoever a great man does, the same is done by others as well (Gītā 3/21). God is the supreme Being. He is superior to all the great men. So all people follow Him. The same fact has been pointed out in the second half of the twenty-third verse of the third chapter.

The Lord ever remains prepared to reciprocate the sentiment of His devotee. King Daśaratha treats Him as his son. So He becomes an obedient son and can't disobey His father.† The Lord wants to reveal the secret that a devotee should accept the same relationship with Him which he has with the member who is most loving to him whether he is his son or father or whether she is his mother. By doing so the Lord will become most loving to him and thus he will be able to attain Him easily.

Secondly, the Lord wants to urge the people that by following His footsteps they should also become worthy sons or parents or brothers or husbands or wives or sisters etc. Morever, they should render service to other members of the family without expecting any reward from them and without being proud of their actions. Those who have affinity with parents and other relatives only for rendering selfless service to them follow the Lord's path in the real sense. By doing so for the good of others they will be free from the feeling of 'mine' they will develop devotion to God and will attain Him.

An Important Fact

Egoistic notion and selfishness are the stumbling blocks to the devotion to God. When a man loves anyone without egoism and selfishness, that love automatically flows

* Many persons out of desire, hatred, fear and love having concentrated their minds on God, being purged of their sins, have attained God in the same way as devotees attain Him through devotion (Śrīmadbhāgavata 7/1/29).

† Lord Rāma declares, "I can enter fire, can eat deadly poison and can jump into the sea in order to carry out the order of My father" (Vālmīki Rāmāyana, Ayodhyā. 18/28-29).

towards the Lord. It is because of egoism and selfishness that his love is confined to the narrow limits. But when these evil propensities are renounced, his love becomes widespread. In that case the assumed affinity for the world perishes and the automatic real affinity for God is revealed.

The man (soul) is a fragment of God (Gītā 15/7) and so his affinity for God is natural. But when he (the soul) having forgotten this real affinity, assumes his affinity for the world, he has to follow the cycle (bondage) of birth and death. This bondage is twofold. One is due to his not realizing his real affinity with God. Another is due to his assumed affinity with the world. But when he realizes his real affinity for God i.e., takes refuge in Him, he becomes free from worry, fear, sorrow and doubt. Then he is said to follow the Lord's path.

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord declared, "As men approach Me, so do I accept them." It means that it is very easy to realize God. Then why do people not worship God ? The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

काङ्क्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः ।
क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ॥ १२ ॥

kāṅkṣantaḥ karmaṇāṁ siddhiṁ yajanta iha devatāḥ
kṣipraṁ hi mānuṣe loke siddhirbhavati karmajā

Those who desire the fruition of their actions worship the gods; because success is quickly attained by men through action. 12

Comment:

'Kāṅkṣantaḥ karmaṇāṁ siddhiṁ yajanta iha devatāḥ'— A man is eligible to perform new actions and it is seen that success is attained through actions. So he firmly holds that God is also realized through actions (penance, meditation and trance etc.) as worldly objects are acquired through actions. He does not pay attention to the fact that the worldly things are acquired through actions as they are limited, they are not ever attained, they are separate from us, and they are kaleidoscopic while the Lord can't be acquired through actions as He is not a product of actions. He pervades everywhere, He is everattained, He is not separate from us (the self) and He is unchanging. So He can be attained as soon as a keen desire to realize Him is aroused. The keen desire for God-Realization is not aroused because of the desire for worldly pleasures and prosperity.

The Lord is like the father while the gods are like shop-keepers. We can take a thing from a shop-keeper only by paying the money but we can take it from the father free of cost. Similarly, we have to perform rituals according to the scriptural methods for gods in order to obtain fruits from them while God bestows upon us our necessities free of cost. More over, as the shop-keepers give even harmful things such as a match box or a knife etc., to a boy on payment but if the boy wants injurious things from his father, he will not only refuse but take the money also. The father gives only beneficial things to the boy. The gods also bestow upon their devotees harmful gifts without thinking of their welfare at the due completion of a ritual. But the Lord, like the father, bestows only those gifts which are for the welfare of the devotees. In spite of this fact the ignorant or dull witted people because of their attachment, sense of mine and desire for the perishable materials worship other gods because they don't know the glory, benevolence and selfless, friendliness of the Lord (Gītā 7/20-23; 9/23-24).

'Kṣipraṃ hi mānuṣe loke siddhirbhavati karmajā'—This human world is the field for actions. Besides this other worlds such as heaven and hell etc., are for reaping fruits of their past actions. The Lord also declares 'Below in the world of men stretch forth the roots (of the universe as a tree) entangling the man in the bondage of actions

(Gītā 15/2). But the other worlds (heaven and hell etc.) exist so that human beings may reap the desirable or undesirable fruits of their virtuous and evil actions. Only human beings are eligible to perform new actions which bear fruit here as well as hereafter. Beasts and birds etc., can't perform new actions.

In this human world those people, who are attached to action, live (Gītā 14/15). It is because of their attachment to actions that they are charmed by the success which is attained through actions. This sort of success is attained quickly but it is short lived. When actions are transitory, how can the success attained through actions be permanent? Therefore, the fruit of the perishable actions is also perishable. Those who perform actions with a desire for fruits, think of the fruit only, they don't think of the perishable nature of that fruit. They take refuge in the gods and worship them only because the gods bestow upon them success quickly when rituals are completed duly. But because of their desire for the fruit of action, they never get liberated from the bondage of action. Consequently, they have to follow the cycle of birth and death.

The real success of human life is God-Realization and that can't be attained through actions. A striver can't even follow the Disciplines of Action, Knowledge and Devotion, which are the means of God-Realization, through actions. He can attain Yoga, not through actions but through the renouncement of actions.

Question:— Action is said to be the means to attain Yoga (Gītā 6/3). Then how is it that a man cannot attain Yoga through action ?

Answer:—In Karmayoga actions are performed in order to renounce affinity for actions and the material for actions. Yoga (union with God) is natural. So Yoga or God-Realization can't be attained through actions. In fact actions are unreal but when they are performed for the sake of the supreme, they are called 'Sat' viz., real (Gītā 17/27).

When a person performs actions with a selfish motive, he does not realize Yoga (i.e., eternal union with God). In Karmayoga actions are performed for others, not for one's own self i.e., not for their fruit (Gītā 2/47). The actions, which are performed with a selfish motive, bind a man (Gītā 3/9) while the actions, which are performed for others, liberate him from the bondage of actions (Gītā 4/23). When actions are performed for others, affinity for actions and their fruit is renounced and that renouncement is conducive to the realization of Yoga i.e., union with God.

While performing actions a man has to depend on the kaleidoscopic objects such as the body, senses, mind intellect, person etc., which are different from the self (soul). The self ever remains uniform without undergoing any modification at all. Therefore, in Self-Realization there is no need in the least of the objects such as the body etc., which are different from the self. A man naturally realizes the self as soon as he renounces his assumed affinity for the worldly objects etc., which are different from him (the self).

Link:– Having described the object of His manifestation in the eighth verse, the Lord explained the merit of knowing the divine character of his actions in the ninth verse. There He explained that actions lose their divine character i.e., become impure when they are performed with the desire for fruit. Now in the next two verses the Lord specially explains how they gain their divine character (purity).

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।
तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम् ॥ १३ ॥
न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।
इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते ॥ १४ ॥

cāturvarṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭaṁ guṇakarmavibhāgaśaḥ
tasya kartāramapi māṁ viddhyakartāramavyayam
na māṁ karmāṇī limpanti na me karmaphale spṛhā
iti māṁ yo'bhijānāti karmabhima sa badhyate

The fourfold caste (order) was created by Me according to the modes of nature and action. Though I am the creator, know Me, the immortal Lord, to be a non-doer. Since I have no craving for the fruit of actions, actions do not taint Me. He who knows Me thus (in reality) is not bound by actions. 13-14

Comment:

'Cāturvarṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭaṁ guṇakarmavibhāgaśaḥ'—The Lord created the four castes (order)—Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra according to the modes of nature and actions of the previous birth*. Besides human beings, the Lord created the gods, manes and other forms of life also according to the modes of their nature and action without showing the least partiality.

The fourfold caste (order) does not apply only to human beings but also to birds, beasts and trees etc. Among birds pigeons are regarded as Brāhmaṇa; hawks, kites and crows are regarded respectively as Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra. Similarly, Peepala, Neema, Tamarind and Acacia are regarded respectively as Brāhmaṇa, Kstriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra. But here the term 'Cāturvarṇayam' stands for only human beings because they can understand this distinction and can perfom their duty accordingly.

When the Lord declares that the fourfold caste was created by Him, He means to say that all of them are his fragments and He is their disinterested friend. Therefore, He always thinks of their welfare. On the other hand they are neither fragments of the gods nor are the gods their disinterested friends. So they should worship Him only though the performance of their own duty (Gītā 18/46).

'Tasya kartāramapi māṁ viddhyakartāramavyayam'—Though the Lord creates, preserves and destroys the entire universe yet He remains unconnected, (untainted) as He has no sense of doership. He is called 'Avyayaṁ' (unspent) only He is the material as well as the efficient cause of the creation. For example in a pot of clay, clay is the material cause and the potter is the efficient cause because while creating the world He remains uniform; neither His energy is spent to create it like the potter who spends his energy to make a pot nor the material is consumed as clay is consumed when the pot is made.

The soul being a fragment of God is also imperishable. But a man does not realize this fact because he regards the acquired body, senses, mind, intellect, wealth and property etc. as his own and for himself. But as soon as he regards them as the world's and for the world, he will realize his immortality.

By using the term 'Viddhi' the Lord urges strivers to know the divine nature of His actions. When actions are performed without having any affinity for actions, the material for actions and the fruit of actions, the actions become divine.

'Na māṁ karmāṇi limpanti na me karmaphale spṛhā'— When the Lord creates the universe, He has not the least affinity for his actions, nor is there any flaw such as partiality etc., in His actions, nor has He any attachment or feeling of 'mine' or desire for the fruit of actions. So those actions don't taint Him.

All perishable objects are fruits of actions. The Lord urges the strivers that they like Him should have no craving for the fruit of actions. If they perform actions without having any craving for the fruit of actions, the actions will

* The four castes (orders of society) (Brāhmaṇa, Kstriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra) are classified according to the mode of nature. In Brāhmaṇa the mode of goodness predominates; in Kṣatriya the mode of passion predominates, while the modes of goodness is secondary; in Vaiśya the mode of passion predominates. While the mode of ignorance is secondary (subordinate); while in Śūdra the mode of ignorance predominates. Thus the castes were determined on the basis of the mode of nature.

not bind them.

In the thirteenth verse the Lord explained that He is a non-doer i.e., He has no sense of doership in spite of performing all actions such as the creation of the universe etc., while in this verse He explains that He has no craving for the fruit of actions. Therefore, a striver should also perform actions without the sense of doership and without having any desire for the fruit of actions. By doing so he is automatically liberated from the bondage of actions.

'Iti mām yo'bhijānāti'— Desires are born when a man has an eye on the perishable mundane objects and then he can't know the reality about God Who is immortal. As soon as desires are renounced the inner sense is purified and then naturally he has an eye on God. By having an eye on Him, he comes to know that He is the disinterested friend of all beings and all the actions performed by Him, aim at the welfare of all beings. The Lord bestows this human body upon us in order to enable us to be liberated from the bondage of actions. But a man without knowing this fact assumes his affinity for actions and is thus bound. Therefore the Lord in spite of having neither the sense of doership nor desire for fruit, creates the universe by His grace in order to inspire human beings to attain salvation, by becoming free from the bondage of actions. When a man knows Him thus (in reality), he is attracted to Him. So Lord Śiva in the Rāmacaritamānasa says to Umā, "He who knows the nature of Lord Rāma, ever remains engrossed in His adoration" (5/34/2).

'Karmabhirna sa badhyate'—The Lord's actions are ever divine. The actions of saints and sages also become divine. Not only saints and sages but also men can make their actions divine by doing away with desire, attachment and the sense of 'mine' which are impurities in actions. When actions are purged of impurities, they become divine and they don't bind them. They lead them as well as to others (who follow them) to salvation.

An easy means to make actions divine is to use the objects etc., acquired from the world in rendering service to the world without regarding them as one's own and for one's own self.

We should give a serious thought to the fact that we neither brought the objects such as the body etc., with us when we came, nor can we carry them with us when we go, nor can we change them of our own accord nor can we maintain them. Similarly, the subtle and the causal bodies, being the evolute of Nature (Prakṛti), also undergo modifications and therefore, we have no affinity for them. Moreover, those objects are not for us because had they been for us, having acquired them, there would have not remained any desire to acquire anything else. So it is a blunder to accept them as ours and for us. They seem to us to be ours so that we may use them in rendering service to others rather than to lay claim to them.

We should have no desire to acquire anything from the world or even to gain any favour from God. We should rather surrender ourselves to Him. The Lord Himself has provided all the necessities of life to us because He is very gracious and merciful and He knows our necessity more than we know because we are dull witted while, He is very sharp witted. So without desiring anything we should use the things that we possess for the welfare of others without any selfish motive. By doing so our affinity for actions and objects etc., is renounced and God Who is an embodiment of Bliss is realized.

Link:–Describing the divine character of His actions in the preceding verse and citing the examples of the ancient seekers of liberation in the next verse, the Lord orders Arjuna to perform his duty disinterestedly.

एवं ज्ञात्वा कृतं कर्म पूर्वैरपि मुमुक्षुभिः ।
कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात्त्वं पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कृतम् ॥ १५ ॥

evaṁ jñātvā kṛtaṁ karma pūrvairapi mumukṣubhiḥ
kuru karmaiva tasmāttvaṁ pūrvaiḥ pūrvataraṁ kṛtam

Having known this, the ancient seekers of liberation also performed action; therefore do thou also perform action as the ancients did in former times. 15

Comment:

[The Lord here concludes the topic of the divine character of actions which He began in the ninth verse].

'Evaṁ jñātvā kṛtaṁ karma pūrvairapi mumukṣubhiḥ'— Arjuna was a seeker of liberation (salvation). But he did not hold that the performance of his duty of fighting would lead him to salvation. So he wanted to renounce the duty by regarding it as savage or terrible (Gītā 3/1). Therefore, here Lord Kṛṣṇa urges Arjuna to attain salvation by performing his duty, by citing the example of the ancient seekers of liberation who attained salvation by performing their duty.

The Lord is emphasizing the same fact here which He mentioned in the twentieth verse of the third chapter by citing the example of Janaka and others and in the first and second verses of this chapter by citing examples of Vivasvān, Manu and Ikṣvāku etc.

It is mentioned in the scriptures that when desire for liberation is aroused in a striver, he should abandon actions because in that case he becomes eligible to attain knowledge (wisdom) rather than to perform actions*. But here He urges Arjuna, the seeker of liberation to perform his duty in a disinterested manner by citing the example of other ancient seekers of liberation.

Karmayoga (Discipline of Action) consists in remaining established in Yoga (union with God) while performing duty and in performing duty while remaining established in Yoga. Actions are performed for the world while Yoga (union with God) is for one's own self. Performance of actions and non-performance of actions are the two states. A Yogī transcends the two, without being attached to either of the two. This Yoga is detachment incarnate. This is not a state. This is God-Realization.

The Lord in the fourteenth verse declared, "Actions do not taint (bind) Me, since I have no craving for the fruit of actions." The person who having known this art (Karmayoga) performs actions by renouncing the desire for fruit, is not bound by actions because the Lord declares, "He who is attached to the fruit of action is bound" (Gītā 5/12). The actions, which a man performs in order to gain pleasures or wealth or honour and praise or paradise etc., bind him (Gītā 3/9). But if he performs actions for the well being of others without any selfish motive in order to renounce his affinity for the world, the actions don't bind him (Gītā 4/23). The reason is that when actions are performed for others, their flow is towards the world and thus attachment to them perishes; and no new affinity for them is born because there is no desire for their fruit.

'Kuru karmaiva tasmāttvaṁ pūrvaiḥ pūrvataraṁ kṛtam'— The Lord orders Arjuna to perform actions for the welfare of the world like other seekers of liberation because he is also a seeker of liberation.

All the mundane materials such as the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., required for the performance of actions have their identity with the world while they are different from the self. They have been acquired from the world so that service to the world may be rendered with them. If they are used by a person in performing actions for himself, he gets attached to those actions. But if all actions are performed for the welfare of others, he is not attached to them. As soon as this attachment is renounced, he realizes his Yoga i.e., union with God which is eternal.

* Actions should be performed so long as a striver does not develop dispassion or has no reverence to listen to My (God's) life history (Śrīmadbhāgavata 11/20/9).

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord explained that having known the divine character of actions the ancient seekers of liberation performed actions. Now the Lord in the next verse starts the topic of knowing the truth about action.

किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।
तत्ते कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥ १६ ॥

kiṁ karma kimakarmeti kavayo'pyatra mohitāḥ
tatte karma pravakṣyāmi yajjñātvā mokṣyase'śubhāt

What is action? What is inaction? As to this even the wise are confused. Therefore, I will explain to thee what action is, by knowing which thou shalt be liberated from its evil effect (worldly bondage). 16

Comment:

'Kiṁ karma'— Common men hold that activities done with the body and senses are only actions while non-performance of an activity is inaction. But the Lord declares that the activities performed with the body, speech and mind are actions (Gītā 18/15).

An action is determined by the motive by which it is performed. An action such as the adoration to the goddess is of the mode of goodness, but if it is undertaken with the motive of fulfilling the mundane desires, it becomes of the mode of passion; and if it is undertaken with the motive of someone's ruin, the same action is of the mode of ignorance. In the same way, the actions which are performed without attachment, the sense of mine and the desire for fruits, are classed as inaction and they don't bind a man to the fruit of action. It means that the truth about action can't be determined by the outward activity only. In this connection even the wise men possessing knowledge of the scriptures get confused, i.e., they are at a loss to understand the truth. An action is classed as an action or inaction or forbidden action according to the motive with which it is performed. Therefore, the Lord declares that He will explain to Arjuna what an action is, why and how it binds a man and how he can be liberated from it, by knowing the truth about it.

If a man has the sense of mine, attachment and the desire for fruits, it means that the action is being performed by him i.e., he is tainted by the action, even though he does not perform an action. On the other hand if he has neither the sense of mine, nor attachment nor the desire for fruit, it means that actions are not being performed by him i.e., he is not tainted by actions even though he performs actions. Thus performance or non-performance of actions is inaction, if he is not tainted by them, while performance or non-performance of actions is classed as action if he is tainted by them, and they bind him.

'Kimakarmeti'—The Lord divided the action into two groups—actions and inaction. Actions bind a man while inactions (which are undertaken for others) liberate him.

In reality physical renunciation of actions is not inaction. The Lord has declared that the renunciation of actions through delusion is declared to be of the nature of 'ignorance' (Gītā 18/7). The renunciation of action from fear of physical suffering is called 'passionate' (Gītā 18/8). In the renunciation of the nature of 'ignorance' and 'passion' the affinity for actions is not renounced though the performance of actions is renounced. The renunciation in which attachment and the desire for reward are abandoned, is regarded as one of 'goodness' (Gītā 18/9). In fact, this is called inaction because affinity for actions is renounced in such a renunciation. Therefore, inaction consists in the performance of actions by remaining untainted by them.

Even the wise are confused about the truth of what an inaction is. The reality about an action or an inaction is that it should not bind a man. Arjuna holds that he will attain salvation if he does not indulge himself in the savage deed of fighting. So the Lord declares that a man does not attain to perfection by mere

renunciation of action (Gītā 3/4) but he can attain it even by engaging himself in battle (Gītā 2/38).

Thus inaction consists either in the performance of actions by remaining untainted or in remaining untainted while performing actions.

'Kavayo'pyatra mohitāḥ'— How can common men understand the truth about action and inaction when even the learned men who are well versed in the scriptures are at a loss to understand this topic? It means that only the liberated souls or the Lord knows the truth about action and inaction.

'Tatte karma pravakṣyāmi'— A man (the soul) is bound by actions, so he will also be liberated by actions. The Lord here promises that He will declare the reality about actions so that they may not lead him to bondage but he may be liberated from the bondage of the wheel of birth and death.

In fact it is neither action nor inaction which binds a man, but it is the desire, the sense of mine and attachment, which bind him. If he renounces desire, the feeling of possession and attachment, he is liberated, while performing action and not performing it. One who understands this fact, knows the reality about actions.

In the fiftieth verse of the second chapter the Lord declared, "Yoga is skill in action." It means that Yoga viz., equanimity (evenness of mind) is the means to be liberated from the binding nature of actions. Arjuna could not understand this point; therefore, the Lord promises to explain this point again.

An Important Fact

'Karmayoga' is not an action. It is selfless service. In it non-attachment predominates. Service and non-attachment— both are not actions. Discrimination plays an important role in both of them.

All the things as the body, senses, mind, intellect etc., are acquired and they are transitory. They should be used only in rendering service to the world because they have been acquired from the world. Moreover, they will have to be renounced. But the Self or God Who is ours can never be renounced. Only the thing which is really not ours but which we have assumed as ours is renounced. In fact this is not renunciation, this is discrimination.

All the materials (the body, senses, mind and intellect etc.) are neither of the self nor for the self, but they are of the world and for the world. The self ever remains unaltered and uniform while the materials are kaleidoscopic. Therefore, whatever action is performed with these materials is for the good of others, not for the self. In it, there is a vital fact that no action can be performed without materials. Even the greatest writer can't write without ink, pen and paper which are of the world. Therefore, when a man uses the articles of the world for the world, he in fact does not render any service to the world, he merely uses his discrimination. Thus it is discrimination which leads to renunciation and service.

This discrimination has been bestowed upon beings from time immemorial. Had discrimination been the fruit of virtuous actions, how would the virtuous actions have been performed without discrimination? It is discrimination by which a man can resolve to perform virtuous actions by renouncing evil actions. As discrimination is self evident, so is Karmayoga (Discipline of Action) which involves no labour. Similarly, in the Discipline of Knowledge the self (Which is detached) is self-evident, while in the Discipline of Devotion the affinity for God is self-evident.

'Yajjñātvā mokṣyase'śubhāt'— The self is good or virtuous while the kaleidoscopic world is bad or evil. The self, in spite of being an eternal fragment of God, having a disinclination for God, has got entangled in the perishable world. The Lord declares that He will describe reality about action by knowing which he (Arjuna) will be liberated from the evil effect i.e., worldly bondage of the wheel of birth and death.

[The topic of the knowledge of action which begins in this verse will be concluded in the thirty-second verse with the declaration, "Thus knowing, thou shalt be liberated"].

A Vital Fact

In the term 'Karmayoga' Karma (actions) are performed for the world, while Yoga (union with God) is for the self. Action and inaction— these are the two states of action which involve egoism. So long as a man has the egoistic notion, he has affinity for the world; and so long as he has affinity for the world, he continues to have the egoistic notion. But 'Yoga' transcends the two states. In order to realize that Yoga it is inevitable to be free from egoism. The method of being free from egoism is performance or non-performance of actions by being equanimous and remaining equanimous during performance or non-performance of actions. It means that he should have equanimity (evenness of mind) during the performance and non-performance of actions (Gītā 2/48), i.e., he should remain untainted.

Those who holding, that a man is inclined towards the world by the performance of actions and is inclined towards God through the non-performance of actions, having a disinclination for the world, meditate on God and experience trance, also perform actions. The feeling that God (perfection) will be attained through meditation and trance, is also a subtle form of action, because he expects God-Realization through the performance of actions in the form of meditation and trance, while God is beyond action as well as inaction.

The Lord declares that He will explain to him the reality about action by which he will attain God immediately because God pervades everywhere, all the time, things, persons, bodies, senses, minds, intellects and life-breaths etc., equally. He remains connected with us when we perform actions and when we don't perform actions. But we are unable to realize Him because of our affinity for actions and objects born of Nature (Prakṛti).

A man has the egoistic notion equally during the performance of actions as well as during the non-performance of actions. But his egoism merges in the world when he instead of performing the actions for himself performs them for the welfare of the world.

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa inspires Arjuna to know the reality of action and inaction.

कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।
अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥ १७ ॥

karmaṇo hyapi boddhavyaṁ boddhavyaṁ ca vikarmaṇaḥ
akarmaṇaśca boddhavyaṁ gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ

The truth about actions must be known and the truth about forbidden action also must be known; even so the truth about inaction must be known; for mysterious is the nature of action. 17

Comment:

'Karmaṇo hyapi boddhavyam'— He who remains untainted while performing actions knows the truth about actions which has been described in the eighteenth verse by the expression, "He who sees inaction in action."

Actions can be divided into three groups, according to the motive by which they are performed, action, inaction and forbidden action. An activity undertaken according to the spiritual injunctions with the desire for fruit, is called action. The action which is performed, being free from the desire for fruit, sense of mine and attachment, for the welfare of others, is classed as an inaction. Even a prescribed action performed with the motive of doing evil to other or giving pain to others is classed as forbidden action.

'Akarmaṇaśca boddhavyam'— He who performs actions while remaining untainted knows the reality about inaction, which has been described in the eighteenth verse by the expression 'action in inaction.'

'Boddhavyaṁ ca vikarmaṇaḥ'— When a man has desire, actions are performed. But when desire is enhanced then forbidden actions (sinful actions) are performed.

The Lord in the thirty-eighth verse of second chapter declared, " Treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, get ready for battle, the savage deed involving violence; thus thou shalt not incur sin." It means that if the actions are performed with equanimity, the seemingly forbidden actions are also transformed into inaction.

Forbidden actions are called 'Vikarma'. Desire is the cause of forbidden actions (Gītā 3/36-37).* Therefore, in order to give up forbidden actions, one should renounce desire. The essence of 'Vikarma' (sin) is desire and to know the essence of 'Vikarma' is to abandon all forbidden actions physically and leave no trace of desire which is the cause of 'Vikarma'.

'Gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ'—It is difficult to understand which actions bind a man and which actions liberate him. Even the learned men knowing the scriptures can't decide 'What is action? 'What is inaction?' and 'What is forbidden action?' Arjuna also finds himself in a sort of dilemma and so he thinks that the performance of his duty of fighting is a savage deed. Therefore, the Lord declares that mysterious is the nature of action.

Question: — In this verse the Lord declares that the truth about forbidden actions must be known while He does not mention the forbidden actions in the topic from the nineteenth verse to the twenty-third verse. Why?

Answer: — In the topic from the nineteenth verse to the twenty-third verse, the Lord has predominantly mentioned inaction in action so that all actions may turn to inaction i.e., the actions may not lead to bondage. Forbidden actions have their affinity for actions because desire is their root. Therefore, the Lord has mentioned forbidden actions as wretched so that men may renounce them as well as the desire which is their root.

First, desire leads a man to action and then its enhancement leads him to perform forbidden actions. But when desire is renounced, all actions turn to inaction. The significance of this topic discussed in these verses is to know the essence of inaction and that lies in annihilation of desires. When desire is renounced, forbidden actions are not performed. So the Lord does not consider it necessary to include 'Vikarma' in the topic from the nineteenth to the twenty-third verses. Secondly, the Lord does not want to dwell upon forbidden actions in detail because they must be renounced as they lead to sins and hells. But in this topic there is an emphasis on the renunciation of desire – in 4/19 by the expression 'devoid of desires and thoughts of the world', in 4/20 by the expression 'having abandoned attachment to the fruit of action', in 4/21 by the expression 'having no desire', in 4/22 by 'even minded in success and failure', and in 4/23 by 'One who is devoid of attachment and works for sacrifice.'

Thus the Lord has said that truth about forbidden actions must be known so that a man, having known it, may renounce desire which is the root of forbidden actions.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord eulogizes the person who knows the truth about actions.

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।
स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥ १८ ॥

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* In the sixteenth chapter where the demoniac nature has been described there from the eighth verse to the twenty-third verse the term 'Kāma' (desire) has been used nine times. It shows that desire is the cause of demoniac nature (forbidden actions).

karmaṇyakarma yaḥ paśyedakarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ
sa buddhimānmanuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsnakarmakṛt

He, who sees inaction in action and action in inaction, is wise among men, he is a Yogī and he has performed all his duties. 18

Comment:

'Karmaṇyakarma yaḥ paśyet'—'Seeing inaction in action' means to remain untainted during performance or non-performance of actions. It means that performance or non-performance of actions is not for the self. When a man holds that he is the doer and so he should reap the fruit of the action, he is bound by actions. As actions are perishable, so is their fruit. The self is eternal and has no affinity for the kaleidoscopic actions and their fruits. Yet It is bound because of the desire for fruit. Therefore, the Lord in the fourteenth verse declared, "Actions don't bind Me because I have no desire for the fruit of actions." It is the desire for fruit which binds him. The Lord declares, "He who is attached to the fruit of action is bound" (Gītā 5/12).

If a striver has no desire for fruit, new attachment does not spring up; and old attachment perishes when actions are performed for the welfare of others. Thus he becomes totally dispassionate. This dispassionate nature turns all actions into inaction.

A man has to take birth either to get out of debt or receive debts from others of all previous births. This transaction has been going on for several births. He can't get rid of the cycle of birth and death so long as he does not close this account. The means to close this account is that he should pay to others what he owes to them and should not expect them to pay him their debts. Thus the account will be closed i.e., he will be liberated from the cycle of birth and death (Gītā 4/23).

If a person does nothing for himself and has no desire, he gets detached from all actions and objects etc., because all the objects and materials etc., such as the body, senses, mind, intellect and life-breaths are of the world, not one's own and they have been acquired from the world so that service may be rendered to the world with them. Therefore, when a striver performs all actions (service, adoration, chant, meditation, trance also) for the welfare of the world, the flow of actions is towards the world and the striver remains detached and untainted. This is 'seeing inaction in action.'

So Long as a striver has affinity for the body and the world, the performance or non-performance of actions will be included in action. So a Karmayogī should remain untainted (detached) while he performs actions and also while he does not perform any action. When a man performs actions without having any desire for fruit, profit, honour, praise and pleasure here or hereafter, it means that he is detached (untainted) during the performance of actions. Similarly, when he does not perform any action, he should not desire in the least to gain honour, praise, pleasures and bodily rest etc., by the non-performance of actions.

He who abandons an action because it is painful or from fear of physical suffering, practises relinquishment of the mode of passion, while he who renounces his obligatory duty out of delusion, indolence and heedlessness, practises relinquishment of the mode of ignorance. Both kinds of relinquishment must be totally abandoned. Similarly, if a man does not perform action so that he may enjoy the state of meditation or trance or liberation, he does not get detached from Nature (Prakṛti). When he renounces his full affinity for Nature, he remains untainted while performing actions and while not performing them.

'Akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ'—'Seeing action in inaction' means performing action or not performing it, by being detached (untainted).

The worldly people want to gain something or the other through the performance and non-performance of actions, while a Karmayogī's only aim through the two, is the welfare of the world by remaining detached. The Lord declares, "For him there is no interest in what is done or what is not done" (Gītā 3/18). If he

has any self interest, he is not a Karma-yogī, he is rather a doer of actions.

So long as a striver assume his affinity for Nature he holds that he is progressing in the mundane sphere through the performance of actions, while in the spiritual sphere through the non-performance of actions. But in fact it is not so. As walking and eating etc., are actions of the physical body, so are reflection and meditation, the actions of the subtle body and trance, the action of the causal body. Therefore, he who performs his duty (action) for the welfare of the world by remaining detached (untainted), sees inaction in action. The same has been pointed out in the forty-eighth verse of the second chapter by the Lord when He declares, "Perform action, being steadfast in Yoga (equanimity)."

Activity or non-activity with some motive in the world are both actions. To remain quite detached while doing actions or refraining from them throughout and being detached while there is performance or non-performance of actions— thus total detachment under all circumstances is called 'Yoga'. This is called 'Karmayoga.'

A striver should remain equanimous during the performance or non-performance of actions. It is called Karmayoga.

Question:— Why has the Lord mentioned 'inaction in action' and 'action in inaction' while in both the cases inaction or detachment is the predominating factor?

Answer:— When a man sees inaction in action there remains predominance of detachment. But when he sees action in inaction there is predominance of the performance or non-performance of action. It means that detachment has its affinity for the self while performance or non-performance of actions has its affinity for the world, including the body. Therefore, detachment is one's own duty while performance or non-performance of action is the duty of another. In order to differentiate the two the Lord has mentioned 'seeing inaction in action' and 'action in inaction'.

In the Discipline of Action there is performance or non-performance of action for the welfare of the world without attachment, because while performing actions one should remain detached and while remaining detached one should perform actions — these two are the principles of the Gītā.

'Pravṛtti' (activity) and 'Nivṛtti' (non-activity)— both are in the domain of Nature. Nature is kaleidoscopic and so is performance or non-performance of actions, while the Self Which is the illuminator and base of the two ever remains uniform without undergoing any modification. In order to explain this fact the Lord has declared that he who sees inaction in action and action in inaction is wise. It means that a striver while remaining established in the self, should perform actions for the welfare of the world viz., as sacrifice.

'Sa buddhimānmanuṣyeṣu'—The striver who sees inaction in action and action in inaction i.e., ever remains detached (untainted), knows the truth about action. Unless he is detached i.e., regards objects and actions as his and for him, it means that he has not known the truth about actions.

In order to know the truth about God, a striver has to identify the self with Him while in order to know the reality about the world he has to separate the self from the world (actions and objects) because he (the self) has identity with God while he is different from the world. The actions are transitory while the self is eternal.

As a common man can't remain unstained in a coal cellar, only a wise man can do so, similarly, only a wise man can remain detached from actions while performing them. Therefore, here as well as in the tenth verse of the eighteenth chapter the Lord calls such a man wise among men. He wants to say that for such a wise man nothing remains to be known.

'Sa yuktaḥ'— A Karmayogī remains equanimous in success and failure because he has totally renounced the desire for the fruit of actions. Here the term 'Yoga' stands for equanimity, He is a Yogī because he

ever remains established in equanimity.

Every being has his natural union with God but he forgets it because he assumes his affinity for the world. When he performs actions for the welfare of the world by renouncing the desire for fruit, the sense of possession and also attachment, his assumed affinity for the world is renounced and he realizes his union with God which is natural and eternal. For such a Yogī nothing remains to be attained for he has attained the Divinity.

'Kṛtsnakarmakṛt'—So long as a man has to attain something or the other, he has to perform actions viz., his attachment for actions does not wither.

The perishable actions bear perishable fruits. So long as he has desire for the perishable, he will have to perform actions. But when having renounced all affinity for the perishable, he attains to the Imperishable Lord, nothing remains to be done. Then a Karmayogī has nothing to do with the performance or non-performance of actions, i.e., he becomes a performer of all actions.

When nothing remains to be done, to be known and to be attained by such a Karmayogī, he is liberated from the evil i.e., the bondage of the wheel of birth and death (Gītā 4/16, 32).

Link:–Now the Lord in the next two verses describes the enlightened soul (sage) who sees inaction in action and action in inaction i.e., who knows the truth about action.

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसंकल्पवर्जिताः ।
ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥ १९ ॥

yasya sarve samārambhāḥ kāmasaṅkalpavarjitāḥ
jñānāgnidagdhakarmāṇam tamāhuḥ paṇḍitam budhāḥ

He whose undertakings are all free from self-centred projections of the mind and desire and whose actions are burnt in the fire of wisdom, him the seer call wise. 19

Comment:

'Yasya sarve samārambhāḥ kāma-saṅkalpavarjitāḥ'—Thinking of sense-objects and remembering them time and again and thinking that some of them are good, useful and pleasurable, is the mental projection (Saṅkalpa) and 'Vikalpa' is antonym to Saṅkalpa, "these are not good and are injurious". This type of thinking is Vikalpa-Intellect is the abiding place of these positive and negative projections. When negative projections give way to positive one, at that time a desire to obtain those objects crops up. That is known as 'Kāma'. In an accomplished Karmayogī projection and desire both are absent e.g., there remains neither 'Saṅkalpa' (projection) which is the origin of desire nor desire which is the product of projection. Therefore, all actions of a 'Karmayogī' are free from projection and desire.

'Saṅkalpa' and desire are the two seeds of action. If they are no longer there, the action becomes inaction, that is to say, the actions lose their binding potentiality. In a liberated soul these two are absent so actions performed by them are not binding. Even though he does everything in order to maintain social order and protect the chain of social obligations yet he is quite untainted with his actions whatsoever.

The Lord has prescribed on occasions the renunciation of desires (6/4) of mental projections (2/55) and of both (6/24-25). Therefore, wherever in Gītā, the renunciation of 'Saṅkalpa' is prescribed, it must always be accompanied by desire as well. In a nut shell, a striver should give up projections and desires both.

There are four states of a motor car.

1. When the motor car stands still in the garage, its engine does not function and

the wheels don't move forward.
2. The engine starts functioning but the wheels don't move forward (its all loss and no gain).
3. The engine functions and the wheels move and cover distance.
4. On the downward slope the engine is stopped while the wheels move and cover distance (its all gain and no cost).

Similarly, a man may have four states — he has

1. Neither desire nor action.
2. Desire but no action (it's all loss and no gain).
3. Desire as well as action.
4. Action but no desire (it's all gain and no cost).

The best state of a motor car is the fourth one when the car runs but no petrol is consumed. Similar is the case with man. The best state is when he performs action without having any desire. Even the wise call such a man a sage.

'Samārambhāḥ'—Here this term stands for the undertakings of a Karmayogī which are free from attachment and aversion. It does not stand for the term 'Ārambha' (undertaking) used in the twelfth verse of the fourteenth chapter because there 'Pravṛtti' (activity) and 'Ārambha'—the two terms have been used. There the term 'Pravṛtti' stands for the performance of duty while the term 'Ārambha' stands for the undertaking of actions for pleasures and prosperity. A sage or an enlightened soul performs actions scrupulously according to the ordinance of the scriptures for the welfare of all beings.

The terms 'Sarve' expresses the meaning that all his undertakings are free from the thought of the world and desire. From morning till night, whatever he does for the maintenance of his body such as washing, eating, walking etc., and for spiritual upliftment such as chant, adoration, reflection, meditation and trance, is free from the thought of the world and desire.

'Jñānāgnidagdhakarmāṇam'—Wisdom consists in knowing the truth that actions have their affinity for the body and the world, not for the self, because actions have a beginning and an end while the self remains the same. All actions are burnt in the fire of this wisdom i.e., actions can't bear fruit in the form of bondage (Gītā 4/16,32).

In fact the body and actions have their identity with the world while the Self is different from them. But by an error, he (the self) assumes his affinity for them. The great souls have no affinity for the so-called their bodies. As actions are performed by the entire world, so are actions performed by the so-called their bodies. Thus when they are detached from actions, not only their present actions but also the stock of past actions are burnt in the fire of wisdom. As far as their fate (Prārabdha Karma) is concerned, it creates favourable and unfavourable circumstances but being detached from the fruit of actions they neither feel happy nor sad.The 'Prārabdha Karmas' get effaced by creating transitory circumstances.

'Tamāhuḥ paṇḍitaṁ budhāḥ'— It is easy to know the reality about an ascetic who ever remains absorbed in the adoration of God but it is very difficult to know the truth about the man living a household life who performs his duty scrupulously without being attached to the actions in the least. The sages also declare, "Those who have renounced the world, enlighten others, and everyone knows them. But a household saint is rarely known."

As a lotus leaf in spite of being born in water and living constantly in touch with it, is not tainted by water, so does a Karmayogī, in spite of being born in the life-of-action (human life) and in spite of living in this world of actions, while performing actions, not get attached to them.* Detachment from actions in not an easy task. Therefore, the Lord in the eighteenth verse has called him wise among men while here He declares that the wise call him a sage. It means that such a Karmayogī is the wisest among the wise.

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* Even Renunciation of actions of a deluded person is conducive to action while even performance of actions of a wise man leads to actionlessness (Aṣṭāvakra Gītā 18/61).

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।
कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः ॥ २० ॥

tyaktvā karmaphalāsaṅgaṁ nityatṛpto nirāśrayaḥ
karmaṇyabhipravṛtto'pi naiva kiñcitkaroti saḥ

Having abandoned attachment to actions and their fruit ever content, without any kind of dependence he does nothing though fully engaged in action. 20

Comment:

'Tyaktvā karmaphalāsaṅgam'— If a man thinks that he is the doer while performing action, regards the body and the senses etc., as his, considers the action his and for him and expects its fruit, then he becomes the cause of the fruit of action. But an enlightened soul totally renounces his affinity for the mundane materials and so he is not in the least attached to the materials for actions, to actions and to the fruits for actions. Thus he does not become the cause of the fruit of actions.

As an army fighting under the guidance of a king with the material supplied by him gets victory over the enemy, but the credit for the victory goes to the king; similarly, the soul being attached to the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., is held responsible for the fruit of actions performed by them.

A great soul having not the least attachment to actions and material for actions is not attached to the fruit of actions.

In fact the self has no attachment to actions and their fruits because It is sentient, imperishable and unaltered while actions and their fruits are insentient, perishable and undergo modifications. But when It assumes Its affinity, by an error, for them, It is bound. If It renounces this assumed affinity, It will realize its detachment from actions and their fruits.

'Nirāśrayaḥ'— Even a king or an emperor has to depend on circumstances, time, objects and persons etc. But an enlightened soul does not depend on them because having realized the self or God he remains satisfied in the self whether he acquires anything or not.

'Nityatṛptaḥ'—The soul being a fragment of God is real and the real never ceases to be (Gītā 2/16) but when It assumes Its affinity for the unreal, It feels shortage. In order to compensate for the shortage It has a desire for the worldly objects. It is satisfied by acquiring the objects but that satisfaction is temporary because the objects are perishable. How can the unreal satisfy the real? Therefore, so long as the soul assumes Its affinity for the perishable actions and objects, and depends on them, It does not realize the automatic satisfaction which is eternal. The same eternal satisfaction has been mentioned in the seventeenth verse of the third chapter by the expression 'Ātmatṛptaḥ' (satisfied with the self).

'Karmaṇyabhipravṛtto'pi naiva kiñcitkaroti saḥ'— The term 'Abhipravṛttaḥ' means that all the actions are scrupulously performed by the emancipated soul because he is not at all attached to the actions and their fruits. All his actions are performed for the welfare of the world.

He who is attached to the fruit of action, can't perform actions scrupulously because a lot of his energy is wasted by thinking of the fruit.

The term 'Api' (even or though) means that such an enlightened soul does not perform an action at all, though he is fully engaged in action. It is because of his detachments that all his actions change into inaction.

When he does nothing, how can he be bound by the fruit of actions? Therefore, the Lord in the twelfth verse of the eighteenth chapter declares that a Karmayogī, who has renounced the fruit of action, does not reap it (the fruit of action) i.e., becomes

free from the bondage of action.

Prakṛti (Nature) is ever active. Therefore, so long as a man has affinity for the modes of Nature (actions and objects), he gets attached to them even without performing actions. If he has no affinity (attachment) for the modes of Nature, he does nothing, even though he is ever engaged in action because all his actions are performed for the welfare of the world.

Link:–Having described the detachment of an enlightened soul in the nineteenth and the twentieth verses, now the Lord in the twenty-first verse describes the detachment of the striver who does not perform duties enjoined by the scriptures, while in the twenty-second verse He describes the detachment of the striver who performs his duties.

निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।
शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥ २१ ॥

nirāśīryatacittātmā tyaktasarvaparigrahaḥ
śārīraṁ kevalaṁ karma kurvannāpnoti kilbiṣam

Having no desires, with his mind and body fully subdued, giving up all sorts of possessions, even performing action necessary only for the maintenance of the body, a Karmayogī incurs no sin. 21

Comment:

'Yatacittātmā'— A man can't keep his body, senses, mind and the self under control because of hope or desire. When he has no hope or desire, his body, senses and mind etc., automatically remain under his control and then no futile actions are performed by him.

'Tyaktasarvaparigrahaḥ'— If a Karmayogī is a recluse, he renounces all worldly possessions. But if he is a house-holder, he does not accumulate any worldly object to derive pleasure out of it. He, by regarding it as the world's, uses it in rendering service to the world. It is inevitable for every striver not to hanker after mundane pleasures.

[This is the only verse in whole of the Gītā where there is description of renunciation of all worldly possessions. In the tenth verse of the sixth chapter there is description of the renunciation of possessions, for a Yogī who practises meditation while in the fifty-third verse of the eighteenth chapter there is description of the renunciation of possession for a Yogī who has attained to the supreme state of knowledge. But here in this verse the renunciation is superior to those renouncements because only here the adjective 'Sarva' (all) has been used with 'Parigrahaḥ' (possessions). The term 'Aniketaḥ' (homeless or having no fixed abode) has been used for freedom from attachment to the abode in the nineteenth verse of the twelfth chapter for a Bhakti-yogī].

'Nirāśīḥ'— A Karmayogī has no hope, no desire and no lust. He does not hanker after worldly pleasures and prosperity. Even if he is not able to renounce their hope or desire totally, he aims at their renunciation.

'Śārīraṁ kevalaṁ karma kurvan'— The actions pertaining to the body are of two kinds — the actions which are undertaken by the body and the actions which are performed for the maintenance of the body. The former have been described in the eleventh verse of the fifth chapter when the Lord declares,"The men of action having abandoned attachment, perform actions only with the body, mind, intellect or even with the senses for the purification of the self." But this verse is pertaining to the detachment of the striver who does not even perform duties enjoined by the scriptures. Therefore, here it is used in the

latter sense i.e., actions (as eating, drinking, bathing, washing etc.) which are necessary for the bare maintenance of the body, are performed by the man of action who has abandoned attachment.

'Nāpnoti kilbiṣam'— He, who is attached to the performance or non-performance of actions in the least, incurs sins i.e., follows the cycle of birth and death. But the man of action being free from hope or desire, is not attached to the performance or non-performance of action and so he incurs no sin, all his actions change into inactions.

Such a Karmayogī (man of action) does not indulge in indolence and heedlessness. Indolence and heedlessness are also enjoyments. Lying idly in a lonely place is an enjoyment and indulgence in useless and forbidden actions is also an enjoyment. Through such indulgences a man enjoys himself. Thus he incurs sins. But a Karmayogī who is given to performing a few action does not indulge in indolence and heedlessness. His mind, senses and body are under his control. Moreover, he is free from hope, desire and sense of possession etc. So forbidden actions can't be performed by him and thus he incurs no sin. Had he indulged in indolence and heedlessness in the least it can't be said for him that he incurs no sin.

Now a doubt arises why it has been said that he incurs no sin when forbidden actions can't be performed by him. The clarification is that all undertakings are enveloped by defects (sins). The Lord declares, "All undertakings are clouded by defects as fire by smoke" (Gītā 18/48). The root of sins is desire or sense of mine or attachment. A Karmayogī (man of action) is free from desire, sense of mine and attachment, or he has such an aim, so he has nothing to do with the performance or non-performance of actions. Therefore, he does not incur incidental sin during the performance of his duty nor does he incur sin by the renunciation of his duty, enjoined by the scriptures.

The second doubt may arise that the Lord has ordered even a wise man (who has attained perfection) to perform action for the welfare of the world (3/25-26). The Lord has also declared, "There is nothing in the three worlds that should be done by Me, nor is there anything unattained that should be attained, yet I engage Myself in action" (Gītā 3/22-24). Therefore, will a Karmayogī, who does not engage himself in action for the welfare of the world, not incur sin? The clarification is that he will incur no sin because he is free from desire, attachment etc., and the sense of mine. Though the Lord and the wise men (enlightened souls) are totally free from desire and attachment etc., yet out of compassion (grace) they perform actions for the welfare of the world, even when it is not obligatory for them (Gītā 3/18). Such an ascetic-Karmayogīs as described in the verse is also ideal for ascetic strivers of Karmayoga. He is automatically a source of inspiration for strivers and common folk.

The third doubt that arises is that the Lord in the thirteenth verse of the third chapter declared "Those wicked people who prepare food for their own sake, verily eat sin", while here He declares that he who performs actions for the mere maintenance of the body incurs no sin. Thus there seems to be contradiction. The clarification is that so long as there is desire for pleasure as well as attachment to actions and materials, he incurs sins whether he performs actions or does not perform them. But when he becomes free from desire and attachment, he incurs no sin.

Question:— Can this verse not be included in the verses pertaining to the Discipline of Knowledge as these are all the marks of man of knowledge?

Answer:— The first point is that here is the context of Karmayoga. Secondly, a Jñānī (liberated soul) holds that he does nothing at all (Gītā 5/8) i.e., he sees inaction in action. So it can't be said about him that he incurs no sin while performing action, because he does not think he is a doer.

Though in the striver, who follows the

path of action, discrimination is not clearly revealed, yet he has a determinate intellect about the three facts that nothing is his, nothing is required for him and nothing is to be done for him. Having resolved this, he remains detached from actions in spite of performing them.

Generally people hold that a Karmayogī leads the life of a householder while a Jñānayogī follows the renounced order. But in fact it is not so. A Jñānayogī (man of knowledge) is he who can discriminate between the self and the body whether he leads the life of a householder or a renounced order. But he who cannot discriminate the self from the body, though he has a determinate intellect about the three facts, is only a Karmayogī whether he is a householder or is in the renounced order.

यदृच्छालाभसंतुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।
समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥ २२ ॥

yadṛcchālābhasaṁtuṣṭo dvandvātīto vimatsaraḥ
samaḥ siddhāvasiddhau ca kṛtvāpi na nibadhyate

Content with what comes to him without desire for fruit, free from the pairs of opposites and envy, even-minded in success and failure, ever though acting, he is not bound. 22

Comment:

'Yadṛcchālābhasaṁtuṣṭaḥ'— A Karmayogī performs actions scrupulously without expecting any fruit. As he has no desire for fruit of action, he remains even-minded in success and failure, profit and loss, honour and dishonour and praise and blame etc. He remains equanimous in all the favourable and unfavourable circumstances without feeling happy or sad. He has knowledge of profit and loss and accordingly he makes wise efforts also. But in result he feels neither happy nor sad. Even if the evenness of mind is lost, a striver should not lose heart because that disturbance of mind is short lived and disappears quickly.

The term 'Lābha' denotes profit as well as loss, agreeable as well as disagreeable, whatsoever is obtained.

'Vimatsaraḥ'— A Karmayogī identifies himself with all beings. He realizes his self as the self in all beings (Gītā 5/7). So he is not at all envious of any being. A Karmayogī is very much cautious lest he should be envious of any being because all his actions are performed for the welfare of the world. If he is envious of anyone in the least, his undertakings can't be for the welfare of the world.

Envy is a subtle evil. Even the neighbouring businessmen, friends and members of the family are seen envious of each other because of each other's good fortune. Where there are antagonistic feelings, this evil is found in abundance. Therefore, a striver should be on his guard against this evil.

'Dvandvātītaḥ'— A Karmayogī transcends the pairs of opposites such as profit and loss, honour and dishonour, praise and blame, pleasure and pain and desirable and undesirable circumstances. So he has a balanced state of mind, free from attachment and aversion etc.

Similarly there can be the pairs of opposites in beliefs, one may believe in the Lord Who is endowed with form and attributes while the other may believe in the Lord Who is formless and attributeless; one may believe in the dualistic principle while the other may believe in the non-dualistic principle. Whether mind is absorbed in God or not, whether seclusion is procured or not, whether peace is attained or not and whether success is achieved or not, a

striver is free from all such sorts of pairs of opposites, like the balance which remains steady when there is equal weight on either side. A Karmayogī, free from the pairs of opposites, is released easily from the bondage of the world (Gītā 5/3).

'Samaḥ siddhāvasiddhau ca'— He remains even-minded in success and failure, pleasure and pain without having attachment or aversion to them. The same evenness of mind has been pointed out in the forty-eighth verse of the second chapter.

When a striver realizes the three facts that nothing is his, nothing is for him and nothing is to be done for him, he attains the state of total evenness of mind.

'Kṛtvāpi na nibadhyate'— When a Karmayogī is not bound even while acting, there is no question of his being bound without acting. He remains free from attachment in the two states.

As a Karmayogī who performs actions merely for the maintenance of the body, is not bound, so is the Karmayogī who performs actions sanctioned by the scriptures, not bound.

In fact it is neither performance or non-performance of actions which binds a man but it is attachment to them which binds him. Similarly, it is detachment which liberates him from bondage. A Karmayogī, like an actor, plays his part according to his caste and order of life, being detached from them. He is not at all attached to the kaleidoscopic Nature (Prakṛti), he remains established in the eternal self. Therefore, he automatically remains even-minded and thus is not bound by actions even while performing them.

If a serious thought is given, it becomes clear that equanimity is natural. Everyone knows that he remains the same in both the favourable and the unfavourable circumstances. It means that the circumstances change but he (the self) remains the same. But we commit an error that we keep an eye on circumstances but we don't keep an eye on the Self. Consequently, we feel happy and sad.

Link:–The Lord in the first half of the ninth verse of the third chapter by the negative inference declared, "The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice." He describes the same fact by the positive inference in the next verse.

गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ।
यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥ २३ ॥

gatasaṅgasya muktasya jñānāvasthitacetasaḥ
yajñāyācarataḥ karma samagraṁ pravilīyate

All the actions of a man who is devoid of attachment, who is liberated, whose mind is established in knowledge, who works for the sake of sacrifice, are dissolved. 23

Comment:

[This verse is an important verse in the Discipline of Action because only here it is mentioned that all the actions of a Karmayogī are dissolved. Similarly, the thirty-sixth verse of the fourth chapter is an important verse of the Discipline of Knowledge, while the sixty-sixth verse of the eighteenth chapter is an important verse of the Discipline of Devotion.]

'Gatasaṅgasya'— Attachment to actions, objects, incidents, circumstances and persons leads to bondage i.e., is the cause of the birth of the soul in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21). When a man performs actions for the welfare of the world without any selfish motive, he becomes free from attachment to actions and objects.

In fact a man (the self) is inherently detached (Bṛhadāraṇyaka 4/3/15). But in spite of being detached, he gets attached to the body, senses, mind, intellect, objects,

circumstances and men etc., by regarding them as his own and is thus bound by having a desire for pleasures. So long as he wants to satiate his desire, his attachment is enhanced. In fact whatever is to happen, will happen and whatever is not to happen will not happen whether he desires it or not. Therefore, he who has any desire, gets entangled in vain and has to suffer pain.

A Karmayogī considering the acquired things of the world, neither of his own nor for himself, utilizes them in rendering service to the world. Thus the flow of things and actions is towards the world and the self remains the same as It is i.e., non-attached.

He has no egoistic notion of rendering service to others because he holds that he has gone out of debt by giving back the thing to the man to whom it belonged. If this egoistic notion subsists, it binds the Karmayogī. It subsists only when he considers the materials for service as his own. When the subtle egoistic notion is rooted, then only service remains. Moreover, he does not expect any reward in the form of money, honour, praise, position and authority etc., because he does not lay claim to them. He wants neither to be called a generous man nor gets pleased if they praise him by calling him generous, nor derives pleasure out of his act of service. By doing selfless service he gets placidity of mind. If that placidity is not enjoyed, he automatically realizes axiomatic detachment.

'Muktasya'—A man (the soul) in spite of being different from actions and objects such as the body etc., assumes them as his own because of desire, attachment and the sense of mine and thus is bound. By following the Discipline of Action when the assumed affinity is renounced, the Karmayogī becomes detached. This detachment leads him to liberation.

'Jñānāvasthitacetasaḥ' —He who ever remains conscious of the self, his mind ever remains established in knowledge. When he becomes conscious of the self, he gets established in the self. In fact he had already been established in the self, he only realized the fact.

In fact the knowledge is gained of the world, rather than of the self because the self is an embodiment of knowledge. The world consists of actions and objects. The self being sentient is different from the insentient actions and objects. The self is their illuminator. As soon as a striver realizes this fact, his affinity for actions and objects is renounced and he realizes that he is naturally established in the detached self.

'Yajñāyācaratah karma samagraṁ pravilīyate'— One form of 'Seeing inaction in action' is to work for the sake of sacrifice. Performance of actions for the welfare of others, without a selfish motive, is called 'Yajña' (sacrifice). He who works for the sake of sacrifice gets liberated while he, who performs actions other than those that are performed for the sake of sacrifice, is bound (Gītā 3/9).

Actions and objects are the evolutes of Nature (Prakṛti). Both of them have a beginning and an end i.e., they are perishable. They neither existed before they were seen nor will exist when they have ended. It means that in the middle they merely seem to exist, actually they don't exist because it is a rule that whatever does not exist at the beginning and at the end, also does not exist in the middle (at present). But the self, the illuminator of objects and action, is sentient and remains the same. Though It has no affinity for objects and actions, when It assumes its affinity for them, it is bound. The method to be liberated from this bondage is to work for the welfare of others without having any desire for fruit.

In the world there are innumerable objects and undertakings which he assumes as his own by having attachment, desire and the sense of mine. When having renounced attachment, desire and the sense of mine, he renders service with them, regarding them as others', all his actions (of past as well as present) are dissolved and he realizes his natural detachment.

An Important Fact

(1) The agent, the instrument and the action are the threefold basis of action (Gītā 18/18). Out of the three the real basis is the agent because the instrument and the action depend on the agent.

If we give a serious thought to the topic, we come to know that a desire to act springs up only when we have a desire to acquire something or the other. The desire to act makes us an agent or a doer. This sense of doership binds a man. When a man performs an action with the desire to acquire anything, his sense of doership is strengthened. But when a Karmayogī without having any desire to acquire anything works for the sake of sacrifice i.e., for the welfare of others, his doership is utilized for the welfare of others and he realizes that he is detached from actions and objects etc. His actions are not accumulated as in the absence of doership all his actions are naturalized.

In the Discipline of Action the renunciation of the sense of mine is important, while in the Discipline of Knowledge the renunciation of 'egoism' is important. If a striver renounces one of them, the other one is automatically renounced. In the Discipline of Action first there is renunciation of the sense of mine and then the renunciation of egoism naturally follows, while in the Discipline of Knowledge the order is reversed. In absence of 'I'ness and mineness the doership and enjoyership both melt away.

When a man of action, has neither the sense of doership nor has any desire, he has not to reap the fruit of action in the same way as a criminal has not to suffer torture of punishment if he dies. When a person does not want to reap the fruit of his actions, all his actions are dissolved.

(2) In the ninth verse of this chapter the Lord declared, "He who thus knows, in their true nature, My divine birth and action, comes to Me." The birth can be divine only of the Lord but the actions of men can also be divine. In the fourteenth verse of this chapter the Lord declares that his actions are divine because he has no desire for the fruit of actions and thus he is not bound by them i.e., his actions change into inaction. In this way if a striver also performs actions without expecting the fruit of actions, his actions also change into inaction. Then in the fifteenth verse He declares, "Having known this, the men who sought liberation, also performed actions." In the sixteenth verse He resolves to teach the reality about action while in the seventeenth verse He declares that one should understand the true nature of action, of forbidden action and of inaction. In the eighteenth verse He declares that he who see inaction in action and action in inaction, is wise among men.

Desire is the root of actions. When desire is enhanced, forbidden actions are performed but when desire is renounced, actions are changed into inaction. The main purpose of the Lord is to describe inaction (from the sixteenth to the thirty-second verse). Therefore, He has described the renunciation of desire which is the root of actions and forbidden actions in each of the verses from the nineteenth to the twenty-third along with inaction* and at last the topic has been concluded in the thirty-second verse.

* Examples of the renunciation of desires—'Devoid of desires' (4/19); "Having abandoned attachment to the fruit of action" (4/20); "Having no hope or desire" (4/21); "Satisfied with what comes to him by chance" (4/22) and "Devoid of attachment" (4/23).

Examples of inaction—

"Actions have been burnt by the fire of knowledge" (4/19); "He does nothing thought engaged in action" (4/20); "While performing actions he incurs no sin" (4/21); "Though acting, he is not bound" (4/22); "The whole action is dissolved" (4/23).

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord declared, "All the actions of a man who works for the sake of sacrifice are dissolved." The term 'sacrifice' in this context stands for duty according to a person's caste and order of life etc. Therefore, the Lord in the next seven verses explains several forms of sacrifice as duties for the strivers according to their inclinations, faiths and qualifications.

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम्।
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥ २४ ॥

brahmārpaṇaṁ brahma havirbrahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam
brahmaiva tena gantavyaṁ bramakarmasamādhinā

For him the ladle with which offering is made is God, the fire is God, the act of offering oblation is God. By God in the form of sacrificer is the oblation poured into the fire of God. God shall be attained by him who is absorbed in God as the act of such sacrifice. 24

Comment:

[Oblation is important in sacrifice. The oblation becomes one with fire when it is poured into fire, it has no separate existence of its own. Similarly, when all the means of God-Realization have no existence apart from God, they become sacrifice.

To perceive God in all sacrifices is to see reality it is not a conception. Actually objects are not real and to visualize them real is an error.

All the sacrifices described from the twenty-fourth verse to the thirtieth verse are included in 'Karmayoga', because the Lord at the beginning of this context declared. "I shall teach thee what action is (the nature of action and inaction), knowing which thou shalt be delivered from evil" (4/16); at the end He declared, "Know all sacrifices as born of action and thus knowing, thou shalt be liberated" (4/32) and in the middle also He declared, "To one who works for the sake of sacrifice, the whole action is dissolved" (4/23). The important factor is that all the actions of the person, who performs them for the sake of sacrifice, are changed into inaction. Therefore, in all these sacrifices there is the description of inaction in action].

'Brahmārpaṇaṁ brahma haviḥ'— The ladle with which the oblation is poured into the fire has been called 'Arpaṇam'—that is God.

Sesame seed, barley and melted butter which are poured and oblation into fire are God.

'Brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam'— He who performs the sacrifice is God (Gītā 13/2) the fire into which the oblation is poured is God and the act of pouring oblation is also God.

'Brahmakarmasamādhinā'— Just as person while sacrificing looks at ladle, sacrificial oblation and fire etc., as Brahma, similarly in every action he who regards the doer, the action, the instrument and matter as Brahma, his itself becomes a state of trance and he is merged in Brahma.

'Brahmaiva tena gantavyam'— When he views everything as no other than God, he attains Him.

The cultured people recite this verse while having meals so that this activity may be changed into sacrifice. When a striver has his meal, he beholds God in the following way:—

(i) The hand with which the food is put into the mouth is God. "With hands and feet everywhere He exists" (Gītā 13/3).

(ii) The food is God. "I am the melted

butter" (Gītā 9/16).
(iii) He who eats the food is also God. "The soul is a fragment of Mine" (Gītā 15/7).
(iv) The fire that abides in the stomach and by which the food is digested is also God. "I am the fire lodged in the body of all creatures" (Gītā 15/14).
(v) The action of offering the food to the fire which abides in the stomach is also God. "I am the offering" (Gītā 9/16).
(vi) The fruit of eating the remnants (remaining food) of the sacrifice is also God. "Those who eat the sacred food that remains after a sacrifice attain to the eternal Absolute" (4/31).

A Vital Fact

The world which is an evolute of Nature (Prakṛti) is in fact seen in the form of objects and actions. The world in the form of objects and actions is kaleidoscopic and ever under goes modifications. But due to attachment we don't perceive the changing nature of objects; we perceive them chiefly as objects. All objects and activities are going into naught. Therefore, the world is practically a naught. There is existence only of the transcendental Absolute. In fact the world does not exist but it seems to exist in the light of the eternal Absolute. The non-existence of the world is explained below—

The world appears in three states— birth, life and death. But actually there is no life. What seems life is nothing but the process from birth to death.

A man (or an object) starts to die the day, he is born though it is said that he is born, he lives and he dies. If a man has to live alive for fifty years and he is twenty years old, it means that he has to live alive only thirty years i.e., he has died forty percent and his life remains only sixty percent. In fact he is dying every moment, the seen is changing into the unseen. But the world seems to exist in the light of the Absolute Who is eternal. Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, "All is God" (Gītā 7/19) (Chāndojña. 3/14/1).

दैवमेवापरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते ।
ब्रह्माग्नावपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैवोपजुह्वति ॥ २५ ॥

daivamevāpare yajñaṁ yoginaḥ paryupāsate
brahmāgnāvapare yajñaṁ yajñenaivopajuhvati

Some Yogīs perform sacrifice to God alone; while others offer the self as sacrifice by the self in the fire of the supreme. 25

Comment:

'Daivamevāpare yajñaṁ yoginaḥ paryupāsate'— In the preceding verse the Lord described the striver who beholds God in all objects and actions. Here by using the term 'Apare' He describes the strivers who perform sacrifice but who are different from those mentioned in the preceding verse.

Here the term 'Yoginaḥ' stands for those strivers who perform actions without expecting any reward.

Those who instead of regarding the actions and objects as theirs and for them, regard them as the Lord's and for Him, perform sacrifice to God because He is the Lord even of the gods. Therefore, those persons who, without having the least attachment, sense of mine and desire for objects and actions, hold that they are only of the Lord, perform sacrifice to Him.

'Brahmāgnāvapare yajñaṁ yajñenaivopajuhvati'— The term 'Apare' has been used to bring out the distinction between the sacrifice mentioned in the first half of this verse and the second half of this verse.

When the soul identifies Itself with Matter, It becomes the embodied soul. But when a

person (the soul) by discrimination, having a total disinclination for Matter merges in God, i.e., has not the least separate existence apart from God, it is called sacrifice.

श्रोत्रादीनीन्द्रियाण्यन्ये संयमाग्निषु जुह्वति ।
शब्दादीन्विषयानन्य इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुह्वति ॥ २६ ॥

śrotrādīnīndriyāṇyanye saṁyamāgniṣu juhvati
śabdādīnviṣayānanya indriyāgniṣu juhvati

Some offer hearing and other senses as sacrifice into the fires of restraint; others offer sound and other objects of sense in the fires of sense. 26

Comment:

'Śrotrādīnīndriyāṇyanye śaṁyamāgniṣu juhvati'— Here the offer of senses into the fires of restraint has been called sacrifice. It means that some don't allow the senses— ear, eye, skin, tongue and nose to incline towards the sensual objects of sound, sight, touch, taste and smell. They constantly restrain their senses.

The senses, the mind, the intellect and the ego are said to be under complete restraint when they are totally free from attachment (Gītā 2/58-59,68).

'Śabdādīnviṣayānanya indriyāgniṣu juhvati'— Sound, sight, touch, taste and smell are the five sensual objects. The discipline in which these objects of sense are offered in the fire of sense, becomes a sacrifice. It means that even when the objects of senses come in contact with senses, the senses remain free from attraction and repulsion or attachment and aversion (Gītā 2/64-65).

In both the sacrifices mentioned in this verse perfection or God-Realization is attained when there is total absence of attachment. This process of two kinds as sacrifice has been described in order to root out attachment.

In the first one a striver controls his senses in loneliness through discrimination, chant and meditation etc. When there is full restraint, he becomes free from attachment and then he remains the same both in loneliness as well as in practical life.

In the second case a striver in his practical life moves among sense-objects with the mine and the senses free from attraction and repulsion i.e., attachment and aversion. When he becomes free from attachment, he remains the same both in loneliness and practical life.

सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे ।
आत्मसंयमयोगाग्नौ जुह्वति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥ २७ ॥

sarvāṇīndriyakarmāṇi prāṇakarmāṇi cāpare
ātmasaṁyamayogāgnau juhvati jñānadīpite

Some others again offer (sacrifice) all the functions of the senses and those of the breath (vital energy) into the fire of the Yoga of self restraint, kindled by knowledge. 27

Comment:

'Sarvāṇīndriyakarmāṇi prāṇakarmāṇi cāpare'— In this verse the trance (concentration of the mind on God or the self) has been given the form of sacrifice. It means that in the state of trance when the

Yogī concentrates his mind on God his senses (sense-organs and organs of action), cease to function, they become calm.

When the Yogī concentrates his mind on God, the function of the breath is offered (sacrificed) i.e., the breath also ceases to function. In the state of trance the breath ceases to function in two ways— the first is breath-control in which breath is suspended. By practice it can be suspended for hours and then for days together. By this process of restraining breath, the duration of life is lengthened in the same way as the age of a frog is lengthened. When it rains, sand also flows with water. A frog is pressed down by that sand. When the sand dries, the frog remains there and its breath ceases to function. But when it again rains next year in the rainy season, it comes to life.

In the second way the mind is concentrated on God or the self and when the mind is totally concentrated, the breathing automatically stops.

'Jñānadīpite'—Both the trance and sleep have their affinity for the causal body. Therefore, both of them appear to be of the same state. Here by the expression 'Jñānadīpite' (kindled by knowledge) the Lord explains that there is a vast difference between the two. In the state of trance the knowledge that God pervades everywhere, remains kindled while during slumber all his inclinations merge in ignorance. During trance breath ceases to function while during slumber breath functions. In slumber no trance is possible.

'Ātmasaṁyamayogāgnau juhvati'— The Yogīs who concentrate their mind, sacrifice all the functions of the senses and those of the breath into the fire of the Yoga of self restraint i.e., having suspended the function of all the senses, breath, mind and intellect, they get fixed in trance. In that state all senses and breath cease to function and the consciousness of God Who is All Truth-Knowledge-Bliss remains fully awakened.

द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथापरे ।
स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥ २८ ॥

dravyayajñāstapoyajñā yogayajñāstathāpare
svādhyāyajñānayajñāśca yatayaḥ saṁśitavratāḥ

Others again offer as sacrifice their wealth or their austerities or their Yoga while others of self restraint and rigid vows offer study of the scriptures and knowledge as sacrifice. 28

Comment:

'Yatayaḥ saṁśitavratāḥ'— Non-violence, truth, non-stealing, celibacy and refrain from hoarding— these five are yama, the five great vows. These five vows have been very much eulogized in the scriptures. The aim of these vows is to enable a man to have disinclination for the world. The expression 'Saṁśitavratāḥ' (persons of rigid vows) has been used for the strivers who fulfil these vows. Besides them other strivers who perform the vows of the four other kinds of sacrifice mentioned in the verse, are also persons of rigid vows. They have been called 'Yatayaḥ' (persons of self restraint) because they having self restraint, make efforts in performing the sacrifice of their own choice and taste.

The term 'Yajñāḥ' (sacrifice) has not been used with the expression 'Saṁśitavratāḥ' as it has been used with the other four terms because 'Saṁśitavratāḥ' (person of rigid vows) has not been considered a separate sacrifice.

'Dravyayajñāḥ'—The sacrifice of wealth includes the construction of wells, tanks, temples and inns, as well as offering of charity in the form of food, water, clothes, medicines and books etc. Those who utilize their wealth and material possessions for the welfare of others, without any selfish motive, by

regarding them as of others only, offer their wealth as sacrifice. To perform sacrifice a man does not need to use anything more than what he actually possesses. As a person expects a child to perform only the action which he is capable of performing so does the omniscient Lord and the world expect us to perform the sacrifice which we are capable of performing.

'Tapoyajñāḥ'— 'Tapoyajñāḥ' (austerity as sacrifice) consists in facing difficult and unfavourable circumstances happily. Observing fast and keeping mum etc., are also austerities as sacrifice. But the best sacrifice consists in the performance of one's duty happily even in the most unfavourable circumstances without the least deviation from it. Such type of austerity proves fruitful quickly.

Rubbish may be harmful for health but it works as a manure in farming. Similarly, unfavourable circumstances work as an austerity if the striver faces them happily. A man feels happy in favourable circumstances and feels unhappy in unfavourable circumstances because of his attachment to pleasures. If he is not attached to pleasures, he can understand the merit of unfavourable circumstances.

'Yogayajñāstathāpare'— Here the term 'Yoga' stands for equanimity. The evenness of mind in success and failure, praise and blame, honour and dishonour and pleasure and pain is called 'Yogayajñā' (Yoga as sacrifice). In this sort of sacrifice a striver has neither attachment to the favourable circumstances nor aversion to the unfavourable circumstances.

'Svādhyāyajñānayajñāḥ'— The study of the scriptures such as the Gītā, the Rāmāyaṇa, the Bhāgavata, the Vedas and the Upaniṣad etc., as well as the study of one's own self and inclinations— all constitute the holy sacrifice of knowledge.

The Lord while explaining the merit of the study of the Gītā declares, "He who studies this sacred dialogue (the Gītā) of ours, by him I would be worshipped through the sacrifice of knowledge" (Gītā 18/70). It means that the study of the Gītā is the sacrifice of knowledge. He who is lost in reflection of the gospel of the Gītā and makes efforts to understand it, performs the sacrifice of knowledge.

अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे ।
प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामपरायणाः ॥ २९ ॥
अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान्प्राणेषु जुह्वति ।
सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदो यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः ॥ ३० ॥

apāne juhvati prāṇaṁ prāṇe'pānaṁ tathāpare
prāṇāpānagatī ruddhvā prāṇāyāmaparāyaṇāḥ
apare niyatāhārāḥ prāṇānprāṇeṣu juhvati
sarve'pyete yajñavido yajñakṣapitakalmaṣāḥ

Others offer as sacrifice the outgoing breath in the incoming, and the incoming in the outgoing, restraining the course of the outgoing and the incoming breaths, solely absorbed in the restraint of the breath. Others who regulate their diet offer life-breaths in life-breaths. All these are knowers of sacrifice and by sacrifice have their sins destroyed. 29-30

Comment:

'Apāne juhvati prāṇaṁ prāṇe'pānaṁ tathāpare prāṇāpānagati ruddhvā prāṇāyāmaparāyaṇāḥ*—

* In this verse is one subject. 'others' and one verb. 'sacrifice'; therefore, here restraint of birth includes inhalation, retention and exhalation of breath.

The heart is the abode of the outgoing breath while the abode of the incoming breath is anus. The Yogīs practise inhalation through the left nostril. That air having taken the life-air which abides in the heart with it, passing through the navel, merges in the incoming breath. This is called 'Pūraka' (Inhalation). When the outgoing and the incoming breaths are restrained, it is called 'Kumbhaka' (Retention of breath). After that the air from inside is exhaled through the right nostril. That air, having taken the outgoing and the incoming breaths, is exhalted. This is sacrifice of the outgoing breath in the incoming breath. It is called 'Recaka' (Exhalation). Inhalation is prasctised by uttering the name of the Lord four times, retention of breath is practised by uttering the same name sixteen times, while exhalation is practised by uttering the same name eight times.

Thus Yogīs through the left nostril practise inhalation, retention of breath and exhalation and then through the right nostril practise inhalation, retention of breath and exhalation. Repetition of this process is known as the sacrifice of the restraint of the breath. When restraint of breath is practised in order to attain God without expecting any other reward, all sins perish.

'Apare niyatāhārāḥ prāṇānprāṇeṣu juhvati'— Only those strivers who regulate their diet can pour as sacrifice their life-breaths into life-breaths. He who eats too much or abstains too much from eating, can't practise this restraint of breath (Gītā 6/16-17).

The sacrifice of life-breaths into life-breaths means sacrifice of the incoming breath into the incoming breath and of the outgoing breath into the outgoing breath i.e., the acts of inhalation and exhalation both are suspended. This is called 'Stambha-vṛtti prāṇāyāma' (Absolute restraint of the breath). Through this restraint of the breath passions are naturally controlled and sins are destroyed. When this sacrifice is practised with the aim of God-Realization, it leads to the purification of the mind and then to God-Realization.

'Sarve'pyete yajñavido yajña-kṣapitakalmaṣāḥ'— The expression 'Sarve'pyete' (all these) has been used for those strivers who perform sacrifices (duties) as described from the twenty-fourth verse to the first half of the thirtieth verse. Performance of these sacrifices destroys their sins and leads them to God-Realization.

In fact all sacrifices aim at the renunciation of affinity for actions. Those, who know this fact, are the knowers of sacrifice. When affinity for actions is totally renounced, God is realized. Those who perform sacrifice, instead, for God-Realization, for acquiring pleasures here as well as hereafter, don't know the reality about sacrifice because it is the desire for the perishable pleasures which leads to bondage. The Lord declares, "Those who seek worldly enjoyments repeatedly go and return" (Gītā 9/21). Therefore, those who perform, even great sacrifices with worldly desires, have to follow the bondage of birth and death.

An Important Fact

During sacrifice oblation is offered into fire. The oblation has different shapes. That oblation loses its identity and becomes one with fire. Similarly when all the means of God-Realization which have been described here as sacrifice, are offered to God, they lose their identity, they become one with God. If they have their separate existence, it means that they have not been offered as sacrifice.

The Lord started this topic of the reality of actions (seeing inaction in action) from the sixteenth verse. The reality about actions is that he who performs actions as sacrifice i.e., for the welfare of others, is not bound by them. As everything put into fire is burnt to ashes, so are actions, which are performed for the sake of sacrifice, dissolved entirely i.e., are reduced to nothing (Gītā 4/23).

Day to day actions performed for the welfare of others without any selfish motive, lead to God-Realization. But even the virtuous actions performed with a selfish motive (with the expectation of their fruits)

can't lead to God-Realization because it is the desire for the perishable which binds a man. So long as he assumes his affinity for the world in the form of its materials and actions, he has attachment to acquire something and to do something. This attachment is called a desire to acquire and an 'urge to act'.

In fact the real desire (need) of a man is to attain God, Whose fragment he is. But he wants to satisfy this need by acquiring the worldly objects because of his inclination to the world and disinclination for God. How can the perishable objects satisfy the imperishable fragment (the self) of the Lord ? So long as he has an inclination to the world, he has a desire to acquire something or the other. In order to acquire it he has to act. Thus so long as he has a desire to acquire and an urge to act viz., he has affinity with materials and actions, he has to follow the cycle of birth and death. How to get liberated from this cycle ? One can be liberated from this cycle of birth and death when one performs actions for the welfare of others without having any desire. This is called sacrifice or ideal for others or actions for the welfare of others.

When actions are performed for the welfare of others the affinity for the world is renounced and a man gets detached from them. If actions are performed for the sake of the Lord, the striver's affinity for the world is renounced, he gets detached from actions and he attains deovtion to God, which is an uncommon trait of a striver.

Link:–The Lord from the twenty-fourth verse to the first half of the thirtieth verse described twelve kinds of sacrifice while in the second half of the thirtieth verse He eulogized the strivers who perform sacrifices. Now He in the next verse explains what is gained through their performance and what is lost through their non-performance.

यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनम् ।
नायं लोकोऽस्त्ययज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तम ॥ ३१ ॥

yajñaśiṣṭāmṛtabhujo yānti brahma sanātanam
nāyaṁ loko'styayajñasya kuto'nyaḥ kurusattama

Those who eat the sacred food that remains after a sacrifice, attain to the eternal Absolute; this world is not for him who performs no sacrifice; how then can he have any other world, O Best of the Kurus (Arjuna) ? 31

Comment:

'Yajñaśiṣṭāmṛtabhujo yānti brahma sanātanam'—Those who realize equanimity having performed the sacrifice i.e., having performed the duty without any selfish motive, eat the remnants of the sacrifice. Such people are released from all sins and attain to the eternal Absolute (Gītā 3/13).

A man (the self) is eternal. It is because of his attachment to the perishable that he holds that he dies. When he, having utilized the so-called his possessions for the welfare of the world gets detached from them, he realizes the fact that he is eternal.

When an action is performed as duty i.e., for the welfare of others without any selfish motive, it becomes sacrifice. An action which is performed with a selfish motive leads to bondage. In a sacrifice every possession is offered to others; for his own self he performs only the action which is inevitable for the bare maintenance of the body (Gītā 4/21). Such an action is also included in sacrifice. This human body has been bestowed upon us so that we may perform sacrifice. If we use it in order to gain honour, praise, comforts and luxuries etc., it leads us to bondage. But if with it, actions are performed only for the sake of sacrifice, it leads him to liberation and he attains to the eternal Absolute.

'Nāyaṁ loko'styayajñasya kuto'nyaḥ kurusattama'—In the eighth verse of the third chapter the Lord declared, "Even the maintenance of the body would not be possible by inaction." Similarly, here He declares, "This world is not for him who performs no sacrifice, how then can he have any other world?" He who performs actions with a selfish motive disturbs peace, causes disorder and strife, and does not attain salvation.

A selfish member who does not perform his duty is not liked even by the members of the family. Non-performance of duty causes quarrels, strifes and annoyance in the family. He who wants to lead a peaceful life in the family should perform his duty by rendering service to the other members of the family. By doing so he becomes the source of inspiration for others and thus unity and peace prevail in the family and in the world here as well as hereafter. On the other hand, he who does not perform his duty scrupulously does not lead a happy life here as well as hereafter.

Link:–In the sixteenth verse of this chapter the Lord promised to explain the truth about actions. Having described it in detail now He concludes the topic.

एवं बहुविधा यज्ञा वितता ब्रह्मणो मुखे ।
कर्मजान्विद्धि तान्सर्वानेवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे ॥ ३२ ॥

evaṁ bahuvidhā yajñā vitatā brahmaṇo mukhe
karmajānviddhi tānsarvānevaṁ jñātvā vimokṣyase

Thus many forms of sacrifice are spread out in the face of Brahma (the Vedas). Know them all as born of action and thus knowing, thou shalt be liberated. 32

Comment:

'Evaṁ bahuvidhā yajñā vitatā brahmaṇo mukhe'—Besides the twelve forms of sacrifice which have been described from the twenty-fourth verse to the thirtieth verse there are many other forms of sacrifice which have been described in detail in the Vedas. The reason is that according to their inclinations, nature and faith, the strivers, follow different spiritual disciplines.

In the Vedas there is description of sacrifices which people perform in order to reap their perishable fruit. So they go to heaven and enjoy the divine pleasures of the gods there. But having enjoyed them, when fruits of their virtuous deeds are exhausted, they return to the world of mortals and thus follow the cycle of birth and death (Gītā 9/21). Self-centred rituals are not enunciated here. But here is the description of the selfless sacrifice by performing which a striver attains to the eternal Absolute (Gītā 4/31).

In the Vedas there is not only the description of the means of enjoying the heavenly pleasures but there is also description of spiritual practice such as hearing of the Vedic texts, cognition (reflection on what is heard), constant musing (constant and profound meditation), restraint of breath and trance (super conscious state), the means of God-Realization. These means have been mentioned here in this verse.

In the fourteenth and the fifteenth verses of the third chapter the Lord declares, "Sacrifice is born of the Veda, and the omnipresent God ever abides in sacrifice we should resort to such sacrifice only for God-Realization."

'Karmajānviddhi tānsarvān'—The expression 'Tānsarvān' (the all) has been used for all the twelve sacrifices described from the twenty-fourth to the thirtieth verse here as well as different forms of sacrifice described in the Vedas.

The expression 'Karmajānviddhi' (born of action) means that all forms of sacrifice are

born of actions. The activities undertaken with the body, the words uttered with the mouth and thoughts of the mind are all included in actions.The Lord declares, "Whatever action a man performs, that is undertaken by the body, speech or mind" (Gītā 18/15).

Arjuna wants to attain salvation but he wants to renounce his duty of fighting by regarding it as a sin. Therefore, the Lord by using the expression 'Karmajāviddhi' explains to him that whatever spiritual practice he will do by renouncing the war, will also be the performance of an action. The Lord declares that it is not action but total renunciation of affinity for actions which leads to salvation. Therefore, he should perform his duty of fighting, remaining detached from actions in order to attain salvation, because it is not the actions but it is attachment to them which binds him (Gītā 6/4). It is also easy for him to perform this duty of fighting because it is his natural or innate duty (specific duty).

'Evaṁ jñātvā vimokṣyase'—The Lord in the fourteenth verse of this chapter declared, "I have no desire for the fruit of actions. So actions don't bind me. He who knows Me thus is not bound by actions." It means that he who has learnt the art of remaining detached from actions while performing them, and translates it into practice, gets liberated from the bondage of actions. The same fact has been pointed out by the Lord in the fifteenth verse when He declares, "Having known thus, the actions were performed by those ancient men who sought liberation." In the sixteenth verse He promised to explain the true nature of action and inaction by knowing which he would be liberated from the wheel of birth and death. In the present verse He concludes the topic by declaring that, having known thus, he will be liberated. It means that when a person performs his duty only for the welfare of the world without expecting any fruit, he is liberated from the bondage of actions.

In the world innumerable actions are performed but a man is bound only by those for which he assumes his affinity. By having this affinity he gets pleased or displeased and thus he is bound by those actions. But when he renounces his affinity for the body and actions, he is liberated from the bondage of actions.

Link:–Having heared the description of sacrifices a striver has a curiosity to know which one of the sacrifices is superior to the others. The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञाज्ज्ञानयज्ञः परंतप ।
सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ।। ३३ ।।

śreyāndravyamayādyajñājjñānayajñaḥ paraṁtapa
sarvaṁ karmākhilaṁ pārtha jñāne parisamāpyate

Knowledge as a sacrifice is superior to any material sacrifice, O harasser of the foes (Arjuna). All actions in their entirety, O Arjuna, culminate in knowledge. 33

Comment:

'Śreyāndravyamayādyajñājjñāna-yajñaḥ paraṁtapa'—The sacrifices which require material objects and actions are called 'Dravyamaya'. The suffix 'Maya' with the term 'Dravya' denotes large quantity. Knowledge as a sacrifice is superior to any material sacrifice because in knowledge-sacrifice there is no need for material objects and actions.

The Lord declares that all sacrifices are born of action (4/32). But here He declares that all actions culminate in knowledge i.e., knowledge as a sacrifice is not born of actions but is born of discrimination. Therefore, the knowledge as a sacrifice

mentioned here does not stand for knowledge as sacrifice (described in 4/28) but it stands for the process of acquiring knowledge from the teachers who are well versed in the scriptures as will be described in the thirty-fourth verse. The material sacrifice described here stands for the twelve forms of sacrifice already described. Having performed the material sacrifice, the knowledge-sacrifice is performed. If we consider minutely we come to know that knowledge-sacrifice is also born of actions but in knowledge-sacrifice there is prominence of discrimination.

'Sarvaṁ karmākhilaṁ pārtha jñāne parisamāpyate'—The terms 'Sarvam' and 'Akhilam' both are synonyms. Therefore, the expression 'Sarvaṁ karma' should mean all actions while the term 'Akhilam' should stand for all material objects.

So long as a man performs actions for himself, he has affinity for them and consequenty his mind remains impure. But when he does not perform them for himself, his mind is purified.

The mind is tainted by three kinds of defects—sins, volatility of mind and ignorance. When a striver performs actions for the welfare of others without any selfish motive, his first two defects i.e., sins and volatility of mind come to an end. Then in order to get rid of the third defect, having renounced actions, he goes to his preceptor so that the preceptor may impart knowledge to him. At that time he does not aim at of actions and material objects but his aim is God-Realization. This is known as culmination of all actions and material objects in knowledge i.e., God-Realization through the attainment of true knowledge.

The Common Method to Attain Knowledge

In the scriptures there are eight inward spiritual means to attain knowledge. They are — (1) Discrimination. (2) Dispassion. (3) Six traits (Quietism, self-control, piety, resignation, endurance and composure). (4) Desire to attain salvation. (5) Hearing of Vedantic texts. (6) Cognition. (7) Constant and profound meditation. (8) Self-Realization.

Discrimination (Viveka) consists in distinguishing the real from the unreal. Renunciation of the unreal or having a disinclination for the world is called dispassion (Vairāgya). Deviation of the mind from the senses is quietism (Śama). Control over the senses is 'Dama'. Reverence for God and the scriptures is called 'piety' (Śraddhā). Total resignation from the world is 'Uparati'. Forbearance in the pairs of opposites such as heat and cold is endurance (Titikṣā). Freedom from doubts is composure (Samādhāna). The desire for salvation is called 'Mumukṣutā'.

When desire for salvation is aroused, a striver having renounced material objects and actions goes to the learned God-Realized preceptor. He hears the Vedantic text which removes his doubts. Then he thinks of the reality about God which is known cognition (Manana). If he holds that the world is real and God does not exist — this is the opposite conception. Removal of this contrary conception is called constant and profound meditation (Nididhyāsana). When he having renounced affinity for all the material objects, gets established in the self, it is called Self-Realization (tatvaṁ padārtha saṁśodhana).*

In fact all these spiritual disciplines are practised in order to renounce the affinity for the unreal. The thing which is renounced is not for one's own self but the result of renunciation (God-Realization) is for one's own self.

* Those who hanker after worldly pleasures and prosperity hear the Vedantic texts, think over the sense-objects, have a constant and profound meditation on riches and attain pains and sorrows.

Link:–Arjuna wants to attain Self-Realization. Therefore, the Lord having described the different methods as sacrifice for Self-Realization, now explains how to attain Self-Realization through the knowledge as sacrifice.

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥ ३४ ॥

tadviddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninastattvadarśinaḥ

Learn that by prostration (humble reverence), by question and by service; the wise who have realized the truth will instruct thee in (that) knowledge . 34

Comment:

'Tadviddhi'— Arjuna in the beginning declared, "I don't foresee any good by slaying my own people in the fight" (Gītā 1/31) and "Only sin will accrue to us if we kill these malignants" (Gītā 1/36). He also declared, "It is better to live in this world even by begging than to slay these honoured teachers" (Gītā 2/5). Thus according to Arjuna it is better to renounce fighting which is his duty rather than to fight. But according to Lord Kṛṣṇa it is not necessary to renounce actions in order to gain knowledge (wisdom) (Gītā 3/20; 4/15). Therefore, it seems that the Lord warns Arjuna that if he, because of his lack of faith in Him, does not believe in what He preaches he should go to the wise preceptor who has realized the truth and he will impart him the knowledge of Self-Realization through the traditional practice of knowledge.*

The Lord further in the thirty-eighth verse declares, "Through the constant practice of the Discipline of Action a striver without any other spiritual practice attains the knowledge of the self. He needs no help from others.

'Praṇipātena' —He should go to the teacher with profound humility and perfect devotion and through prostration surrender himself, his body and possessions etc., to him. He should be very submissive and very cautious that in no way disrespect is meted out to the preceptor. He should keep his inquisitiveness always awake.

'Sevayā'—He should render service to his preceptor with his body and things and try to please him by carrying out his order and acting according to his wish.

A striver renders the greatest service to the saints (great souls) by translating their principles into practice because their principles are more loving to them than even their bodies. They remain prepared to sacrifice their life in order to protect their principles.

'Paripraśnena'— A striver should ask questions to his preceptor with inquisitiveness, simplicity and humility in order to know the reality about God rather than to display his own learning or to put his preceptor to a test. He should put such questions, "Who am I?" What is the world? What is the cause of bondage? What is salvation? How can I realize God? What are the obstacles to my spiritual practice? How to do away with these obstacles? Why am I unable to understand this topic of God- Realization?" Thus he should satisfy his curiosity and gain knowledge from his preceptor.

'Jñāninastattvadarśinaḥ'— The expression 'Tattvadarśinaḥ' stands for the seers of truth who have realize God while

* First of all having peformed his duty according to his caste and order of life scrupulously, a man having purified his mind should renounce the performance of actions. After that having possessed the traits such as quietism and self-control etc., he should go to the God-Realized preceptor in order to attain the knowledge of Self-Realization.
In order to gain that knowledge the inquistive striver, having taken the fuel used in a sacrifice, with profound humility, should go to the God-Realized preceptor who is well versed in the scriptures.

the term 'Jñāninaḥ' stands for the wise who are well versed in the Vedas and the scriptures. The striver should go to such a wise seer and acquire knowledge from him.

According to the purification of the mind there are three kinds of strivers who are qualified to gain that knowledge—the superior, the mediocre and the inferior. The superior ones are those who attain the knowledge of the self merely by hearing the Vedantic texts.* The mediocre ones attain this knowledge by hearing, cognition and constant and profound meditation. The inferior ones have several doubts. In order to clarify those doubts it is necessary to possess knowledge of the Vedas and the scriptures. Without possessing knowledge even the preceptor who has realized the truth, can't clarify the doubts of his disciples. Similarly, even a learned preceptor who has not realized the truth, can't conduce his disciple to Self-Realization. Therefore, the preceptor should be one who is wise and who has also realized the Truth.

'Updekṣyanti te jñānam'— By prostration, by service and by asking questions with profound humility, the striver will be able to gain knowledge from the preceptor as the preceptor is specially inspired to impart him the true knowledge because of the disciple's profound humility and perfect devotion. It does not mean that the high souled man expects them. But without humility and devotion the striver will not be able to gain that knowledge.

Here the term 'Jñānam' stands for Truth-Realization on Self-Realization. In fact a striver does not gain knowledge about the self but he gains it about the world. When a striver comes to know the truth about the unreal world, his affinity for the world is renounced and he realizes the self which is self-evident.

The term 'Updekṣyanti' (instruct) means that the great souls instruct the striver but it is not necessary that he should attain Self-Realization . The reason is that faith is a trait of the heart. A man may prostrate, question and serve hypocritically. Further in the thirty-ninth verse He declares, "The man who has faith gains knowledge (wisdom)". Therefore, here it mentioned that the wise will instruct him in that knowledge while in the thirty-ninth verse it is mentioned that the man, who has faith, gains knowledge.

Link:–Having explained how to attain Self-Realization through the knowledge as sacrifice the Lord in the next three (thirty-fifth, thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh) verses explains the real merit or glory of Self-Realization.

यज्ज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेवं यास्यसि पाण्डव ।
येन भूतान्यशेषेण द्रक्ष्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि ॥ ३५ ॥

yajjñātvā na punarmohamevaṁ yāsyasi pāṇḍava
yena bhūtānyaśeṣeṇa drakṣyasyātmanyatho mayi

When thou hast known it, thou shalt not, O Arjuna, again get deluded like this; and by that thou shalt see all beings without exception in the slef and then in Me. 35

Comment:

'Yajjñātvā na punarmohamevaṁ yāsyasi pāṇḍava'— The Lord in the preceding verse said, 'The wise will instruct thee in (that) knowledge." But merely by hearing, a man does not realize the self. The Lord declares. "Even after hearing, no one understands the self" (Gītā 2/29) because the self is beyond the access of mind and speech etc. The self can be realized by the

* The superior ones are those who have a burning desire to realize the Truth at once.

self when the striver attaches importance to discrimination. When he attaches importance to discrimination, ignorance totally perishes and that discrimination changes it self into Self-Realization and affinity is totally renounced for the insentient. Then he never gets deluded.

In the first chapter of the Gītā Arjuna gets deluded when he holds that when his kinsmen are killed in the battle, no one will remain alive to offer them water and rice balls. So they will go to hell. Moreover it will be difficult for the living women and children to earn their living in order to maintain their body. Having realized the self, a striver does not get deluded like this because his affinity for the world is totally renounced.

'Yena bhūtānyaśeṣeṇa drakṣyasyātmani' —When he realizes the self, he sees all beings (infinite universes) in the self. As a person having awaken from sleep sees the entire creation of his dream in him, so does a striver having realized the self, see all beings in the self. The same fact has been pointed out by the Lord in the twenty-ninth verse of the sixth chapter when He declares, "A Yogī sees all beings abiding in the self."

'Atho mayi'—A striver having gained knowledge of the self by hearing, cognition constant and profound meditation etc., from the preceptor, sees all beings in the self—this is the realization of 'Tvam' (Self-ealization) and then he sees all beings and the self in God—this is realization of 'Tat' (God-Realization). Thus he realizes the identity of the self with God and, then nothing remains for him except God. The trio of the seer, the sight and the seen gets extinct. When this trio gets extinct, there remains no perceiver. Therefore, the expression 'he perceives' refers to the feeling prevailing in the inner sense of that perfect soul.

The sea and its waves may seem different but both of them are one and the same– both of them are nothing but water. The sea and the waves are limited while the element, water is unlimited. Therefore, he who sees water in both the sea and the waves, really sees. As are the sea and its waves, so are the world and the body. As waves appear and disappear in the sea so are bodies born and they perish in the world. But both of them have no independent existence of their own, only God has independent existence. In God there is neither world nor body. They seem to exist because of the existence of God. Both of them because of their affinity for Nature are limited, while God is limitless. He who instead of seeing the world and bodies, sees the Supreme Lord existing equally in all beings, really sees (Gītā 13/27).

अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः ।
सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं संतरिष्यसि ॥ ३६ ॥

api cedasi pāpebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpakṛttamaḥ
sarvaṁ jñānaplavenaiva vṛjinaṁ saṁtariṣyasi

Even if thou art the most sinful of all sinners, thou shalt undoubtedly cross all sins by the boat of knowledge (wisdom) alone. 36

Comment:

'Api cedasi pāpebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpakṛttamaḥ'— There are three categories of the sinful persons—(1) The sinful. (2) The more sinful. (3) The most sinful. Here the Lord uses the superlative degree to emphasize the fact that even the most sinful of all sinners can cross the ocean of sin by the boat of the knowledge of the self.

The Lord assures the strivers that, not to talk of the strivers who are engaged in spiritual practice, having renounced sins, even those who have committed innumerable

sins, need not lose heart as far as attainment of salvation (God-Realization) is concerned. Even the most sinful person can attain salvation in this life and even immediately if he resolves never to commit sin but only to attain salvation or Self-Realization. The sins of such a person of firm resolve, perish in no time.

As darkness of hundreds of years disappears as soon as the lamp is lit, it doesn't take time so do sins disappear as soon as knowledge of the self is gained.

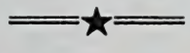
The Lord uses the term 'Cet' (if) of clarify the point that generally the sinners are not engaged in spiritual practice but it does not mean that they can't be engaged in it. If by coming into contact with a great soul or by being influenced by an incident or circumstance or environment etc., they resolve that they have to gain knowledge of the self or God they cross the ocean of sins by the boat of the knowledge of the self.

The Lord in the thirtieth and the thirty-first verses of the ninth chapter declares, "Even if a man of the most vile conduct worships Me with exclusive devotion, he must be regarded as righteous for he has rightly resolved and he attains to eternal peace very quickly."

'Sarvaṁ jñānaplavenaiva vṛjinaṁ saṁtariṣyasi'—All the sins are incurred when a man assumes his affinity for Nature and its evolute, the body and the world. When he gains knowledge of the self, his affinity for them is totally renounced and he gets rid of all sins.

When he gains the knowledge of the self it means that he gains the boat of knowledge. Even the most sinful of all sinners crosses the ocean of sins by the boat of the knowledge of the self. This boat is such as can neither be broken nor can a hole be made nor be sunk. Through it one can cross the ocean of sins.

This boat of the knowledge of the self can be gained through knowledge-sacrifice (4/33). Discrimination occupies an important place from the very beginning in the knowledge-sacrifice attains perfection in the knowledge of the self. When this perfection is attained, sins perish totally.



यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा ।। ३७ ।।

yathaidhāṁsi samiddho'gnirbhasmasātkurute'rjuna
jñānāgniḥ sarvakarmāṇi bhasmasātkurute tathā

As the blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, even so does the fire of knowledge reduce all actions to ashes. 37

Comment:

'Yathaidhāṁsi samiddho'gnir-bhasmasātkurute'rjuna'— In the preceding verse the Lord declared, "You can cross the ocean of sins by the boat of the knowledge of the self." Now the question arises what will happen to the ocean of sins which still exists. The Lord clarifies the point by giving another illustration. He declares that the blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, so does the fire of knowledge reduce all actions (sins) to ashes i.e., all sins perish.

'Jñānāgniḥ sarvakarmāṇi bhasma-sātkurute tathā'— As the blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, so does the fire of knowledge reduce the three kinds of actions —Prārabdha (in the form of fate), Sañcita (store of accumulated actions) and Kriyamāṇa (the present actions) to ashes. It means that when a man gains knowledge of the self, his affinity for the actions or the world is totally renounced. Consequently, the world loses its independent existence, there remains only the existence of God.

In fact all actions are performed by the modes of nature (Gītā 13/29). But a man is bound by them when he thinks that he is

the doer. As actions such as circulation of blood, growth of the body, breathing and digestion etc., are performed by the modes of nature, so are eating, drinking, walking, sitting, seeing and speaking etc., performed. But when he holds that he is the doer of those actions they bind him. The sense of doership makes activities an action, otherwise they are mere activities.

By the knowledge of the self the stock of the accumulated actions is totally destroyed because all accumulated actions depend on ignorance. All the present actions are destroyed i.e., change into inaction because he has no sense of doership, they don't bear any fruit. As far as Prārabdha actions (Fate) are concerned, they produce favourable and unfavourable circumstances but the man of knowledge is not in the least affected by them, he remains equanimous without feeling sad or happy. Thus when he has no affinity for actions in the least, all his actions are reduced to ashes i.e., are changed into inaction.

Link:–The Lord in the first half of the next verse reveals the glory of knowledge while in the second half He glorifies Karmayoga (the Discipline of Action).

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।
तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥ ३८ ॥

na hi jñānena sadṛśaṁ pavitramiha vidyate
tatsvayaṁ yogasaṁsiddhaḥ kālenātmani vindati

Verily, there is no purifier in this world like knowledge. He who becomes perfected in Yoga finds it in the self in course of time. 38

Comment:

'Na hi jñānena sadṛśaṁ pavitramiha vidyate'— Here the term 'Iha' stands for the human world because only human beings are qualified to gain purity. Such opportunities are not available in other species. All rights in other species are acquired through human body only.

The belief in the independent eixstence of the world and the desire to derive pleasure out of it, give birth to all sins (Gītā 3/37). By the knowledge of the self when the world ceases to have its independent existence, all sins are totally destroyed and a man becomes completely pure. Therefore, in the world there is no other means as capable of sanctifying as knowledge.

The means such as the performance of sacrifice, charity, penance, adoration, vows, fasts, chanting the Lord's name, meditation, breath-restraint, bath in sacred rivers such as the Ganges, the Yamunā and the Godāvarī, destroy his sins and purify him. But none of them is as purifying as is knowledge of the self, because all of them are the means while knowledge is the end.

God is the purest among the pure (Viṣṇu-sahasra. 10). The knowledge of the self, being conducive to the realization of God Who is the purest (most sacred), is very pure.

'Yogasaṁsiddhaḥ'—'Yogasaṁsiddhaḥ' (perfected in Yoga) stands for the great soul who has attained perfection in Karmayoga. Such a great soul in the fourth verse of the sixth chapter has been called 'Yogārūḍha' (one who is enthroned or established in Yoga). This state is the last stage of Karmayoga. When a striver attains this state, he realizes the self and his affinity for the world is totally renounced.

In Karmayoga (the Discipline of Action) all actions are performed for the welfare of the world without any selfish motive and without the sense of doership. By doing so a striver's affinity for the body and the world, which are the evolutes of nature, is totally renounced. It means that in that case the world has not its independent existence, only actions are performed. This is known as perfection in Yoga.

When a man is attached to action and its fruit, he does not realize 'Yoga' i.e., union with

God. In fact a man has no affinity for actions and material objects because he (the self) is eternal while they are transitory (perishable). What can the eternal (Imperishable) self gain from the perishable actions ? The self can gain nothing by actions—this is called 'Karma-vijñāna' (Science of Actions). Having realized this science of actions a man has no desire to reap the fruit of actions in the form of pleasure etc., and then he realizes his natural eternal union with God which is called 'Yogavijñāna' (Science of Yoga). This is called perfection in Yoga.

'Tatsvayaṁ kālenātmani vindati'— The knowledge of the self, which reduces all actions to ashes and like which there is no purifier in this world, is found in the self immediately, when a Karmayogī becomes perfected in Yoga.

In the thirty-fourth verse the Lord said that a striver should go to the wise preceptor who would instruct him in (that) knowledge. But by doing so it is not necessary that he will gain knowledge of the self. But here He declares that a Karmayogī having become perfected in Yoga gains this knowledge certainly.

The term 'Kālena' used in this verse needs special attention. The Lord has used the third inflexion which means that through the discipline of action one certainly gains the knowledge of the self or realizes God.*

The term 'Svayam' shows that a Karmayogī gains the knowledge of the self while performing his duty without the guidance of a preceptor or the scripture or any other means.

The expression 'Ātmani vindati' means that a Karmayogī in order to gain the knowledge of the self need not go anywhere else. When he becomes perfected in Yoga, he finds this knowledge in the self.

As the Lord pervades everywhere, He also pervades the self. But a person does not realize this fact because of his inclination towards the world and disinclination for God. When he performs his duty scrupulously for the welfare of others without any selfish motive, his affinity for the world is renounced i.e., his identity, sense of meum and desrie, for the world perish and he finds this knowledge in the self easily . The Lord declares, "He who is free from dualities (the pairs of opposites) is released easily from bondage" (Gītā 5/3).

This knowledge of the self cannot be gained by the senses, mind, intellect and other means (instruments). He will find the knowledge of the self in himself. The reason is that the sentient self can't be known by the instentient senses, mind and intellect etc. The means such as, hearing the Vedantic text, cognition and constant and profound meditions etc., may help in removing the obstacles such as impossibility and contrary sentiments etc., but they can't induce a man to gain the knowledge of the self. He can gain that knowledge by renouncing his affinity for the insentient. As the world can be seen with the eye but the eye can't be seen with the eye, but it can be said that the organ with which any object is seen is the eye so can it be said that He who is the Knower of all persons and objects etc., and by Whom all objects etc., are known is the self or God Who is not known by any means (Bṛhadāraṇyaka. 2/4/4).

An Important Fact

Having studied the verses from the thirty-third to the thirty-seventh it seems that the Lord has glorified the Discipline of Knowledge (Jñānayoga). But if we give a serious thought to this topic, we come to know that the Lord means to say that the knowledge of the self, which is so glorious and pure and for gaining which He is ordering him to go to the preceptors who are well versed in the scriptures, can be easily and certainly gained through the Discipline of Action (Karmayoga). The Lord declares, "He who is perfected in Yoga finds this knowledge of the self automatically in himself" (Gītā 4/38). Thus He has actually glorified the Discipline of Action. He means to say that the knowledge of the self, which he can gain from the wise preceptors through prostration, questioning and service and then by carrying out their orders by

* In the term 'Kālena' instead of the second inflexion Kālam, third inflexion has been used which shows that the fruit will be surely reaped i.e., through Karmayoga the striver will certainly find this knowledge in the self.

practising cognition and constant and profound meditation, can be gained merely by performing his duty of fighting. It is not certain whether he will gain the knowledge of the Self from the preceptors because they may themselves have not realized the Truth. Besides it, he may not have reverence for them. Moreover, in this process first he will see all beings in his self and then in the Lord (Gītā 4/35). Thus in this process of gaining knowledge there is possibility of doubt and delay. Therefore, the Lord exhorts Arjuna to follow the Discipline of Action (performance of duty) by which he will gain the knowledge of the Self certainly and immediately. So He does not want to preach him the common method (of eight inward spiritual means) to gain knowledge.

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself is the Lord of all the great souls. So how can He order Arjuna to go to the wise who have realized the Truth and learn knowledge from them ? Further in the forty-one verse of this chapter the Lord eulogizes the Discipline of Action (Karmayoga) and clearly orders Arjuna in the forty-second verse to fight by being fixed in equanimity.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse explains who is eligible to attain that knowledge.

श्रद्धावाँल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।
ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ ३९ ॥

śraddhāvāllabhate jñānaṁ tatparaḥ saṁyatendriyaḥ
jñānaṁ labdhvā parāṁ śāntimacireṇādhigacchati

. He who has faith, who is devoted to it (i.e., knowledge) and who has subdued his senses, gains knowledge (wisdom) and having gained knowledge he attains at once the supreme peace. 39

Comment:

'Tatparaḥ saṁyatendriyaḥ'— In this verse it is mentioned that the man who is full of faith gains knowledge. A man lacking faith may hold that he has faith. So the Lord has given two adjectives 'Saṁyatendriyaḥ' (who has subdued the senses) and 'Tatparaḥ' (devoted) as the criteria of faith. The striver who has subdued his senses can be called devoted to knowledge. If senses have not been subdued and they hanker after sensual pleasures, it means that the striver is not fully devoted to the knowledge of the Self.

'Sraddhāvāllabhate jñānam'—The belief in God, saints, righteousness and the scriptures is called 'Śraddhā' (faith).

So long as a striver does not realize God he should have as much faith in Him as he has when he has seen something himself. God pervades everywhere, but He is not realized because he holds that He is far away from him. When he holds that He is in him and his only aim is to realize Him, he gains the knowledge of the Self or God.

The world being kaleidoscopic has no existence of its own but it seems to exist because of the existence (light) of God. When a striver has this faith, he gains knowledge of the self immediately. It is only because of his lack of faith that he does not gain this knowledge immediately.

So long as senses are not subdued and the striver is not engrossed in his efforts, his faith may be regarded as imperfect. If the senses are attracted towards their objects there cannot be any concentration of efforts. That results in the dominance of something other than the practice. Unless there is devotion to exclusive practice, the faith cannot mature. Because of immature faith only the realization of the essence (Self) is delayed, otherwise there is not at all any cause of delay in realizing the Self that is ever available.

A person through prostration, questioning and service should gain knowledge from the wise preceptors as mentioned in the thrity-fourth verse. But it is not certain that he will gain it because he can prostrate, question and

serve the preceptor hypocritically, not from the heart. But here in this verse it is mentioned that he gains knowledge certainly because he has faith, which is a trait of the heart (Gītā 17/3).

When a striver has the faith that he must gain knowledge of the self immediately this is called 'Śraddhā' God is ever-existent and 'I am also existent and I want to realize God.' Why is then delay ? Fully developed faith immediately leads to God-Realization.

An Important Fact

How surprising it is that the Kaleidoscopic world attracts us, while the eternal Lord does not attract us ! The reason is that we regard the transitory world as permanent and want to derive permanent joy out of it which is impossible.

In fact all the worldly objects including the body, senses, mind etc., are perishing (decaying), while the Self is eternal. Had the self not been eternal who might have seen the changes ? Had a man (the self) had identity with the body, he (the self) would have also died with the death of the body. But it is not so. Thus, it is by an error that he identifies the Self with the body otherwise the Self is eternal while the world (body, senses, mind etc.) is transitory.

Secondly, in this verse the term 'Labhate' has been used. It means the attainment of something which is eternal or which ever exists. A thing which has no pre-existence or which is created and compounded, acquisition of such a thing can't be called 'Labhate'. The reason is that the thing which did not exist in the past and will not exist in future only appears in the interim but is not acquired. To regard acquistion of such a thing appearing in the interim is disrespect to discrimination. The self existed before the world was created and It will exist after the destruction of the world. Actually the world does not exist, it seems to exist. The unreal has no existence and the real never ceases to be. As soon as we realize this fact it means that we have faith which will inspire us to gain knowledge of the self.

'Jñānaṁ labdhvā parāṁ śāntimacireṇādhigacchati'—The Lord in the third verse of the ninth chapter declared, in the negative, "Those who have no faith in this Dharma (knowledge of the Self). return to the world of death without attaining Me." The same fact has been mentioned here in the positive form when the Lord declares, "He who has faith attains to the supreme peace" i.e., is liberated from the cycle of birth and death. Why does a man not attain to the supreme peace ? The answer is that a man seeks the supreme peace in the perishable world— persons and objects etc., by having a disinclination for God. The supreme peace abides in all beings naturally but because a person seeks it in the perishable world, he can't attain it. When he gains knowledge of the self, his affinity for the world, which is the abode of sorrows, is totally renounced and he attians the supreme peace which is axiomatic (natural).

Link:–In the next verse the Lord speaks ill of the person who lacks discrimination, who has no faith and who is of a doubtful disposition.

अज्ञश्चाश्रद्दधानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।
नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥ ४० ॥

ajñaścāśraddadhānaśca saṁśayātmā vinaśyati
nāyaṁ loko'sti na paro na sukhaṁ saṁśayātmanaḥ

The man who is devoid of discriminative in sight, who has no faith, who is of a doubting nature, perishes. For the doubting soul, there is neither this world nor the world beyond, nor any happiness. 40

Comment:

'Ajñaścāśraddadhānaśca saṁśayātmā vinaśyati'— The man whose discrimination is not aroused or the man whose

discrimination is aroused but he does not attach importance to it, and who lacks faith, such a man of a doubting nature perishes i.e., is deprived of the spiritual path. Such a person of the doubting nature uses neither his own discrimination nor listens to the teachings of others. So how can his doubts be removed and how can he progress spiritually ?

It is natural for a striver who follows the spiritual path to be confronted with doubts because his knowledge is imperfect, which is known as ignorance*. Therefore, the appearance of doubt is natural and it is not very harmful. But it proves harmful when a person does not make effort to remove it, but he rather wants to maintain it. In such cases the doubt becomes a principle for the person and he holds that the spiritual practice is nothing but hypocrisy. So he ceases to believe in God and the scriptures etc., and becomes an atheist. Consequently, it leads to his downfall. Therefore, a striver should try to remove his doubt. By doing so he will gain knowledge. It is characteristic of a striver to investigate and discover.

A striver should go on proceeding father to attain his aim. He should not be satisfied with what he has known. He should have a burning desire to remove his doubts and acquire knowledge. By adopting such an attitude his doubt is removed by saints or the scriptures or by any other means. If there is no one to remove his doubts, it is removed by God's grace.

An Important Fact

The soul is a fragment of God (Gītā 15/7). Therefore, when It has an appetite (desire) to attain God and feels sad and uneasy without attaining Him, He can't tolerate his sadness and He satisfies his appetite. Similarly, when a striver gets uneasy or sad in order to remove his doubts, the Lord Himself removes his doubts and frees him from sadness, he has not to pray to Him. An intense feeling of a doubtful person to remove his doubt does reach God automatically.

The Lord is the disinterested friend of all beings (Gītā 5/29). So He ever remains prepared to do away with the restlessness, sadness and doubts of a man some how or the other. He commits an error that having known a little he holds that he has attained perfect knowledge. This pride leads to his downfall.

'Nāyaṁ loko'sti na paro na sukhaṁ saṁśayātmanaḥ'— In this verse there is the description of such a man of suspicious nature who is ignorant i.e., who lacks discrimination and who is faithless i.e., does not follow the preaching of others. Such a man of sceptical nature perishes. For him there is neither this world nor the world beyond nor any happiness.

In the practical life a man of doubting nature behaves badly towards others because he doubts their integrity and actions etc. He also can't attain salvation because it requires a determinate intellect or firm resolution and the man of doubting nature can't resolve whether he should chant the Lord's name or study the scriptures whether he should perform the mundane actions or attain God-Realization and so on. Because of his doubting nature he can't attain happiness or peace. Therefore, a striver through discrimination and faith must get rid of this doubt.

When a striver comes across two contradictory statements, it leads to scepticism. Such scepticism can be removed either by discrimination or through the reverential study of the scriptures or by revemtially following the advice of saints and holy men. Thus if a sceptic is lacking in knowledge, he should acquire knowledge and wisdom. If he is wanting in faith he should endeavour to gain faith. It is because without especially enhancing either of these two his scepticism can't be removed.

* 'Ajñāna' (ignorance) does not mean total absence of knowledge but it means imperfect knowledge. A man (the self) being a fragment of God can't lack knowledge (discrimination) totally. But he attaches importance to the unreal by regarding as real. Moreover he has no disinclination for the unreal, even when he regards it as unreal. This is ignorance. If he makes the right use of his knowledge (discrimination), his ignorance will perish and discrimination will be revealed because ignorance has no independent existence.

Link:–The Lord, having started the topic of the Discipline of Knowledge in the thirty-third verse, discussed the method of attaining knowledge and revealed its glory. Then He declared, "The knowledge which can be gained through prostration and service etc., from the teacher, can be automatically gained by a man who has attained perfection in Karmayoga." After that He described the person who is eligible to attain this knowledge and also the person who is ineligible to attain it. Thus he concluded the topic.

Now the question arises what a Karmayogī should do in order to attain perfection in Yoga. The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणं ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम् ।
आत्मवन्तं न कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय ॥ ४१ ॥

yogasaṁnyastakarmāṇaṁ jñānasaṁchinnasaṁśayam
ātmavantaṁ na karmāṇi nibadhnanti dhanañjaya

He who has renounced all actions by Yoga, whose doubts have been destroyed by knowledge and who is self-possessed—actions do not bind him, O winner of wealth, (Arjuna). 41

Comment:

'Yogasaṁnyastakarmāṇam'— All the objects such as the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect etc., which seem ours, have been bestowed upon us so that we may render service to others with them rather than to lay a claim to them. Therefore, if they are utilized in rendering service to others, by considering them theirs, the flow of actions and objects is towards the world and we realize equanimity which is axiomatic. Thus such a Karmayogī, who through equanimity has renounced his affinity for actions, is called 'Yogasaṁnyastakarmā' (one who has renounced actions by Yoga).

When a Karmayogī sees inaction in action and action in inaction i.e., ever remains detached during performance or non-performance of actions, he is really 'Yogasaṁnyastakarmā.'

'Jñānasaṁchinnasaṁśayam'— Generally a man has doubts how he will be able to renounce his affinity for actions while performing them, how he will attain salvation if he does not work for himself and so-on. But when he knows the reality about actions all his doubts are dispelled*. He comes to know very well that actions and their fruits are transitory while the self ever remains uniform. Therefore, actions have their affinity for the world rather than for the self. In this way when actions are performed with a selfish motive, a man is attached to them i.e., develops affinity for them. But when they are performed for others without any selfish motive affinity for them is renounced. It proves that performance of actions for others, not for one's own self, leads to salvation.

'Ātmavantam'— A Karmayogī aims at Self-Realization. So he ever remains self-possessed. All his actions including eating, drinking, sleeping and sitting etc., are performed for others (the world) because actions have their affinity for the world, not for the self.

'Na karmāṇi nibadhnanti'— When a Karmayogī does not perform any action for himself, his affinity for actions is renounced and he gets liberated from the worldly bondage for ever (Gītā 4/23).

In fact it is not actions which lead to bondage but it is desire for fruit, sense of mine, attachment and the sense of doership for actions which lead to bondage.

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord declared, "Doubts are destroyed by knowledge, and affinity for actions is renounced by equanimity." Now in the next verse He orders Arjuna to resort to Yoga having cut as under the doubt.

* The reality about actions has been descnbed from the sixteenth to the thirty-second verses of this chapter. Out of them the eighteenth verse is an important one.

तस्मादज्ञानसंभूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः ।
छित्त्वैनं संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ॥ ४२ ॥

tasmādajñānasaṁbhūtaṁ hṛtsthaṁ jñānāsināṭmanaḥ
chittvainaṁ saṁśayaṁ yogamātiṣṭhottiṣṭha bhārata

Therefore, having cut as under with the sword of knowledge (wisdom) this doubt in thy heart that is born of ignorance, resort to Yoga and stand up (for the fight), O Bhārata (Arjuna). 42

Comment:

'Tasmādajñānasaṁbhūtaṁ hṛtsthaṁ jñānāsināṭmanaḥ chittvainaṁ saṁśayam'— In the preceding verse the Lord declared, "He who has renounced affinity for all actions by Yoga (equanimity) and whose doubts have been dispelled by knowledge and who is self-possessed— actions do not bind him i.e., he is liberated from the bondage of birth and death. Therefore, He by using the term 'tasmāt' (Therefore) inspires Arjuna to perform his duty. Arjuna had a doubt how the savage deed of fighting would lead him to salvation. Moreover, he was in a dilemma whether he should follow the Discipline of Action or that of Knowledge. So the Lord advises him to remove his doubt so that he may perform his duty scrupulously. A doubting soul can never perform his duty efficiently.

The expression 'Ajñānasaṁbhūtam' (born of ignorance) means that all doubts are born out of ignorance i.e., when a man does not understand the true nature of the actions and Yoga. Ignorance consists in regarding the actions and objects as one's own and for one's own self. So long as there is ignorance, doubt resides in the heart because actions and objects and perishable while the self is imperishable.

In the third chapter emphasis has been laid on the performance (discharge) of duty while in the fourth chapter there is an emphasis on knowing the truth about Karmayoga. The reason is that an action can be performed scrupulously, only when the reality is known about it. Moreover, if the true nature of actions is known, the actions which bind a man, can liberate him from bondage (Gītā 4/16,32). Therefore, in this chapter the Lord has laid special emphasis on knowing the truth about actions.

In the preceding verse also the Lord pointed out this fact by the expression 'Jñāna saṁchinnasaṁśayam' (whose doubts have been destroyed by knowledge). All the doubts of the man who comes to know the art of the performance of actions (duties) are destroyed. The art of the performance of action consists in doing nothing for one's own self."

'Yogamātiṣṭhottiṣṭha bhārata'— Arjuna had sunk on the seat of his chariot, casting away his bow and arrow (Gītā 1/47). He gave the Lord a flat denial by declaring that he would not fight (Gītā 2/9). Here the Lord orders Arjuna to stand up for the fight having resorted to Yoga. The same order was given to Arjuna in the forty-eighth verse of the second chapter when He said, "Perform action being steadfast in Yoga." The term 'Yoga' stands for equanimity (evenness of mind). The Lord declares. "Evenness of mind is called Yoga" (Gītā 2/48).

Arjuna thought that sin would accrue to them by fighting (Gītā 1/36,45). Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa orders him to fight by having evenness of mind; thus he would not incur sin (Gītā 2/38). In this way we see that performance of duty by being equanimous is the means to be liberated from the bondage of actions.

In the world innumerable actions are performed but we remain free from their bondage because we have neither attachment nor aversion to them. It is because of attachment or aversion that we are connected with actions. When we become free from attachment and aversion i.e., get established in equanimity, we are not connected with actions and thus become free from the bondage of actions.

The self ever remains equanimous and uniform while actions and their fruits ever undergo changes. When actions are performed for others and objects are regarded as others' and for them, the affinity for actions and objects is totally renounced and equanimity which is axiomatic is automatically realized.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुन-संवादे ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासयोगो नाम चतुर्थोऽध्यायः ॥ ४ ॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde jñānakarmasaṁnyāsayogo nāma caturtho'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ, Tat, Sat, the names of the Lord, in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavadagītā, the knowledge of Brahma, the supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, this is the fourth discourse designated:

"The Yoga of Knowledge as well as the Disciplines of Action and Knowledge."

This fourth chapter is designated as 'Jñānakarmasaṁnyāsayoga' because in this chapter there is the description of 'Karmayoga' (the Discipline of Action) and 'Sāṅkhyayoga' (the Discipline of Knowledge) in order to attain the Supreme Knowledge i.e., God- Realization.

Words, letters and Uvāca in the Fourth Chapter

(1) In this chapter in **'Atha caturtho'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are three words, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are six words, in verses there are five hundred and eleven words and there are thirteen concluding words. Thus the total number of the words is five hundred and thirty-three.

(2) In this chapter in **'Atha caturtho'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are seven letters, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are twenty letters, in verses there are one thousand three hundred and forty-four letters and there are fifty concluding letters. Thus the total number of the letters is one thousand four hundred and twenty-one. Each of the verses of this chapter consists of thirty-two letters.

(3) In this chapter **'Uvāca'** (said) has been used three times—**'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** twice and **'Arjuna Uvāca'** once.

Metres Used in the Fourth Chapter

Out of the forty-two verses of this Chapter, in the first quarter of the thirty-first and thirty-eighth verses and in the third quarter of the second, tenth, thirteenth and fortieth verses 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'na-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the sixth verse 'ra-gaṇa' being used there is **'ra-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the twenty-fourth verse and in the third quarter of the thirtieth verse 'bha-gaṇa' being used there is **'bha-vipulā'** metre. The remaining thirty-three verses are possessed of the characteristics of right **'pathyāvaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

Śrī Hariḥ

FIFTH CHAPTER

Introduction

Lord Kṛṣṇa in the fourth chapter from the thirty-third to the thirty-seventh verse eulogized the tradition of going to the teachers who have realized the Truth, having renounced actions and objects and ordered Arjuna to gain knowledge from them (Gītā 4/34). In this process of Self-Realization it is indispensable to meditate upon God in loneliness. Arjuna did not want to fight because he thought that he would incur sin by fighting. He wanted to attain salvation. So Arjuna thought that the Lord was asking him to gain knowledge by renouncing actions.

Then the Lord in the thirty-eighth verse of the fourth chapter declared, "He who is perfected in Yoga gains it (knowledge) in the Self." It means that a striver following the Discipline of Action need not go to the great persons who have realized the truth nor has he to practise any other spiritual discipline in order to gain knowledge. Thus Karmayoga (the Discipline of Action) as the means of Self-Realization has been eulogized here.

Arjuna in the thirty-third verse of the fourth chapter heard the glory of the customary method of gaining knowledge and in the thirty-fourth Verse by the term 'viddhi' he held it as the Lord's order for him to gain knowledge by that method. Thus he heard the praise of Karmayoga (the Discipline of Action) in the thirty-eighth verse and the forty-first verse. In the forty-second verse He ordered him to perform his duty of fighting. Thus having heard the glory of 'Jñānayoga' and 'Karmayoga' both and also His order to gain knowledge and perform his duty, Arjuna could not decide which one of the two disciplines was better. Therefore, in order to get his doubt cleared by Lord Kṛṣṇa Arjuna puts the question.

अर्जुन उवाच

संन्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि ।
यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥ १ ॥

arjuna uvāca

saṁnyāsaṁ karmaṇāṁ kṛṣṇa punaryogaṁ ca śaṁsasi
yacchreya etayorekaṁ tanme brūhi suniścitam

Arjuna said:

Thou praisest, O Kṛṣṇa , the renunciation of actions (Sāṅkhyayoga) and again their unselfish performance (Karmayoga). Tell me for certain which one of the two is decidedly conducive to my good. 1

Comment:

'Saṁnyāsaṁ karmaṇāṁ kṛṣṇa'— Arjuna did not want to fight because he did not want to kill his kinsmen. In order to support his point Arjuna put forward several arguments in the first chapter. He said that fighting would incur sin (Gītā 1/45). According to him it was better to live in the world even by begging than to fight (2/5) and he bluntly said to Kṛṣṇa that he would not fight (2/9).

Generally a hearer interprets the orator's word according to his own views. Having seen his kith and kin, Arjuna out of delusion thought it proper to abandon his duty of fighting. So he interpreted the Lord's word according to his view that He was praising the attainment of Self-Realization by renouncing actions.

'Punaryogaṁ ca śaṁsasi'— The Lord in the thirty-eighth verse of the fourth chapter declared, "He who is perfected in Yoga finds this knowledge (wisdom) of the Self certainly without any other spiritual discipline." Keeping this fact in mind Arjuna says to the Lord that sometimes He praises

the Discipline of Knowledge (4/33) while at the other time He praises the Discipline of Action (4/41).

'Yacchreya etayorekaṁ tanme brūhi suniścitam'— This sort of question was put by Arjuna in the seventh verse of the second chapter also. In response to his question the Lord, having explained Karmayoga, ordered Arjuna to perform action being fixed in Yoga (even-mindedness) in the forty-seventh and forty-eighth verses of the second chapter. Again in the second verse of the third chapter Arjuna asked the Lord,"Tell me decisively the one way by which I may attain to the highest good (bliss or salvation)." In response to it the Lord in the thirtieth verse of the third chapter ordered him to fight, being free from desire, egoism and mental fever (grief) while in the thirty-fifth verse He declared,"Better is one's own duty, though devoid of merit than the duty of another well discharged."

Here in this chapter also the Lord clearly declares,"The unselfish performance of action is better than the renunciation of action" (5/2); "a Karmayogī is easily set free from bondage" (5/3); "renunciation is difficult to attain without Yoga (Karmayoga) but a Karmayogī attains quickly to the Absolute" (5/6). Thus the Lord explains to Arjuna that he should follow the Discipline of Action by which he can attain to the Absolute very quickly and easily.

Arjuna was especially interested in attaining salvation. So time and again he asked Lord Krsna the way to attain salvation (2/7; 3/2; 5/1). A keen desire plays an important role in attaining salvation. Even without dispassion a striver having a keen desire for salvation can follow the Discipline of Action in order to attain his aim of salvation. Arjuna was not totally dispassionate but he had a keen desire to attain salvation and so he was a deserving candidate.

The thirty-second verse of the first chapter and the eighth verse of the second chapter reveal that, not to speak of the kingdom on earth, Arjuna does not even desire to attain the unrivalled sovereignty over the gods. But it does not mean that Arjuna had no desire to gain kingdom and pleasures because he said that he longed neither for victory nor kingdom nor pleasures by slaying his kinsmen. It means that he was prepared to gain victory or kingdom without slaying his kinsmen. Again in the sixth verse of the second chapter he said, "We don't know whether we shall conquer them or they will conquer us and we do not want to live by slaying them." It means that if it was certain that they would conquer the enemy and if they could get kingdom without slaying them, they were prepared to gain it. Further in the thirty-seventh verse of the second chapter the Lord said to Arjuna that he would be benefited in either case. If he was slain, he would go to heaven and if he became victorious, he would enjoy the earth. Had Arjuna no desire in the least to go to heaven and to enjoy the worldly pleasures, the Lord perhaps would not utter such words. It means that Arjuna could not cultivate real dispassion, but he had a desire to attain salvation which is also clear in this verse.

Link:–Now the Lord answers Arjuna's question.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।
तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥ २ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

saṁnyāsaḥ karmayogaśca niḥśreyasakarāvubhau
tayostu karmasaṁnyāsātkarmayogo viśiṣyate

The Blessed Lord said:

'Saṁnyāsa' (Discipline of Knowledge) and 'Karmayoga' (Discipline of Action) both lead to salvation. But of the two 'Karmayoga' is better than 'Sāṅkhyayoga'. 2

Comment:

[According to the principle of the Lord every person can follow the Disciplines of Action and Knowledge (Renunciation of Actions) according to his caste, order of life and sect etc., because His principle is not for the people of any particular caste, order of life or sect etc. In the first verse of this chapter Arjuna called the customary method of gaining knowledge systematically having renounced actions 'Karma saṁnyāsa' (Renunciation of Actions). But according to the Lord's principle a person can gain knowledge by following the Discipline of knowledge without renouncing actions. Therefore, the Lord supporting the customary principle of Arjuna answers the question according to His own principle.]

'Saṁnyāsaḥ'—Here this term 'Saṁnyāsaḥ' stands for 'Sāṅkhyayoga' (Discipline of Knowledge) rather than renunciation of actions. While answering Arjuna's question the Lord discusses the path of 'Sāṅkhyayoga' in order to gain knowledge. Through that Sāṅkhyayoga every man, while performing his duty according to his caste, order of life and sect etc., in every circumstance, can gain knowledge of the self i.e., attain salvation.

In the 'Sāṅkhya' discipline there is prominence of discrimination. This discipline can't be successful without a keen dispassion with discrimination. While following the discipline a striver has an eye only on God without accepting the independent existence of the world. So the Lord declares, "The goal of the Unmanifested is hard to reach by the embodied being" (Gītā 12/5). In the sixth verse of this chapter also the Lord declares that Samnyāsa is difficult to attain without Karmayoga because Karmayoga is an easy means to get detached from the world.

'Karmayogaśca'—Every human being has been attached to the performance of actions from time immemorial. In order to do away with this attachment, performance of action is indispensable (Gītā 5/3). Karmayoga is the art of performing actions in order to get rid of this attachment. In Karmayoga (Discipline of Action) every action, whether trivial or otherwise, is not to be taken note of; it has to be performed for the welfare of others without any selfish motive in order to get detached from it. So long as actions are performed with a desire for their reward, one remains attached to them.

'Niḥśreyasakarāvubhau'—In response to Arjuna's question which he put in the first verse, the Lord says that both Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga lead to salvation because the same equanimity is attained by both of them. The same fact has been clarified in the fourth and in the fifth verses of this chapter. This has also been pointed out by the Lord in the twenty-fourth verse of the thirteenth chapter when He declares, "Some attain knowledge of the self by the path of knowledge while others attain it by the path of action." Thus both the path of knowledge and the path of action are the independent paths to attain God (Gītā 3/3).

'Tayostu karmasaṁnyāsāt'— Sāṅkhyayoga is of two kinds—the one has been described in the thirty-fourth verse of the fourth chapter in which there is physical renunciation of actions while the other has been described from the eleventh to the thirtieth verses of the second chapter in which there is no renunciation of actions. Here the expression 'Karmasamnyāsāt' stands for the two kinds of Sāṅkhyayoga.

'Karmayogo viśiṣyate'—The Lord in the third verse explains that a Karmayogī should be regarded as a perpetual Saṁnyāsī (with the spirit of renunciation) because he is easily released from worldly bondage. Again in the sixth verse He declares that renunciation is difficult to attain without Karmayoga and a Karmayogī quickly attains to the Absolute. It means that in Sāṅkhyayoga (Discipline of

Knowledge) there is need of Karmayoga, while in Karmayoga there is no need of Sāṅkhyayoga. Thus out of the two which lead to salvation, the path of action has been declared to be superior by the Lord.

A Karmayogī performs actions for the welfare of the world and also to set examples to the masses (Gītā 3/20) without any selfish motive. This is known in the Gītā as the action as a sacrifice. He who performs actions for himself is bound (Gītā 3/9, 13). But a Karmayogī who works only for the welfare of the world without any selfish motive is liberated from the bondage of actions (Gītā 4/23). Therefore, Karmayoga is better of the two.

The path of action can be followed by all the people of all castes, creed and order of life etc., under all circumstances. But the Karma saṁnāyasa (renunciation), Arjuna talks about, can be followed only under special circumstances (Gītā 4/34) because all the people can't come across such great men who have realized the truth. Moreover, they can't have full faith in those great souls and can't have an opportunity to live in their company. Thus Karmayoga is better of the two.

Karmayoga consists in making proper use of the available circumstances even such as the savage deed of fighting. No one is incapable and dependent in following this path of action because in it there is no desire to acquire anything. It is the desire which makes a man incapable and dependent.

The sense of doership and the desire to reap the fruit of actions are the bondages. A Sāṅkhyayogī and a Karmayogī both have to renounce their affinity for the world. A Sāṅkhyayogī roots out the sense of doership through dispassion and discrimination, while a Karmayogī roots it out by performing actions for the welfare of others without any desire for the fruit of actions. Thus the former is liberated by renouncing the sense of doership while the latter is liberated by renouncing the desire to reap the fruit of actions. If a striver renounces the sense of doership, his desire for the fruit of actions is renounced; and if he renounces the desire for the fruit of actions, his sense of doership is renounced. A man has the sense of doership only when he has a desire to acquire something or the other. When actions are performed without the desire for fruit, they change into inaction. Thus a Karmayogī, like an instrument, has no sense of doership.

A striver tries to renounce his attachment to the worldly beings, objects and circumstances etc., because it leads him to bondage. In order to renounce it, he does not consider any being or object etc., his nor does he do and desire anything for himself. All his actions are performed for the welfare of others without any selfish motive. The desire for fruit of actions causes the sense of doership and the sense of 'mine'. If he has no desire for the fruit of actions, his sense of doership comes to an end because it is not the actions but attachment to them and the desire for fruit which lead to bondage. When he does not derive pleasure out of actions nor does he desire fruit, how can the sense of doership remain? When he has no desire for the fruit of actions, his sense of doership merges in the aim for which the action is performed and only God remains.

The 'egoism' of a Karmayogī perishes quickly and easily because he works for others. So his egoism is also absorbed in rendering service to others. But the egoism of a Jñānayogī (he who follows the path of knowledge) continues to exist as he holds that he is a 'Mumukṣa' (seeker of salvation) and he works for his welfare. A Karmayogī performs all activities for the good of others. Thus his ego subsides. On the other hand a Jñānayogī practises discipline for his well being. His ego subsists as he practises discipline for himself.

The prominent feature of 'the Discipline of Knowledge' is the lack of the independent existence of the world; while the prominent feature of 'the Discipline of Action' is the lack of attachment. A striver following the Discipline of Knowledge through discrimination wants to hold that there is no independent existence of the world but his attachment to the worldly objects it is very difficult for him to hold this opinion in his practical life. But the striver following the Discipline of Action gets rid of his attachment automatically because his aim is to render service to others without

any selfish motive. Moreover, it is easy for a Karmayogī to renounce objects because they will be utilized by others; while it is difficult for a Jñānayogī to renounce them by regarding them as transitory and illusive, unless his dispassion is very keen. Secondly a Jñānayogī easily abandons the objects of the inferior quality but the objects of the superior quality which he considers useful for him, can't be easily abandoned. But a Karmayogī may offer the objects which are useful for him to others easily because he holds that they will be used by others. If there is an extra slice of bread in the plate we try to put away the one which is stale, spoiled and dry; but if we want to give it to any one, we will give a good slice so that it may be used by him. So the Discipline of Knowledge is very difficult to practise without renouncing attachment. It is because of attachment that a Jñānayogī being entangled in worldly pleasures may have a downfall.

A man cannot renounce attachment merely by knowing the unreal as unreal*. Though the objects seen on the screen in the cinema are unreal yet a cinema-goer gets attached to the cinema and spoils his time, money, eyesight and character. It is attachment rather than the objects which binds a man. Thus an object which may be either real or unreal or may transcend the two, binds a man if he is attached to it. So a striver should try to root out this attachment.

Link:–Now the Lord in the next verse explains why Karmayoga is better of the two.

ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते ॥ ३ ॥

jñeyaḥ sa nityasaṁnyāsī yo na dveṣṭi na kāṅkṣati
nirdvandvo hi mahābāho sukhaṁ bandhātpramucyate

He who neither hates nor desires should be known as a Saṁnyāsī (renouncer); for, free from dualities (pairs of opposites) he is released easily from bondage, O mighty-armed (Arjuna). 3

Comment:

'Mahābāho'—The term 'Mahābāho' stands for one who is mighty armed i.e., brave and also for one whose brothers and friends are great men. Arjuna's friend was Lord Kṛṣṇa the disinterested friend of all beings and his brother was Yudhiṣṭhira, the most righteous person who had no enemy. By addressing Arjuna as 'Mahābāho' the Lord means to say that he possesses the might to follow the path of action easily.

'Yo na dveṣṭi'—A Karmayogī does not hate any being, object, circumstance or principle etc., but he renders selfless service to everyone. If he has the least hatred for any one, he can't follow the Discipline of Action scrupulously. He should give priority in rendering service to the person to whom he bears even a little malice. The Lord by using the expression 'Na dveṣṭi' first of all, wants to impress that he who deems someone as bad and wants to harm him can't grasp the secret of 'Karmayoga.'

A Vital Fact

For a Karmayogī it is more significant to renounce evil rather than to do good for the welfare of others. The actions and

* A man can renounce the unreal by regarding it as unreal by being established in the self. This establishment in the self does not depend on instruments such as the mind and intellect etc., because they themselves are unreal. How can the unreal, which is known by the unreal, be renounced?

objects are limited and, therefore, only limited service can be rendered with limited resources. But when a man renounces evil, his unlimited inward feeling is prominent. Secondly, by doing good to others a person cultivates the notion of pride which is the root of the demoniac traits. Where there is imperfection, there is pride. On the contrary where there is perfection, pride is out of the question.

If a serious thought is given it becomes clear that no good can be done without the help of the perishable objects and in fact those perishable objects are not ours but they are of those whose service is rendered with them. Then if a man is proud of doing good, it is attachment to the perishable. So long as a man is attached to the perishable, he can't attain Yoga. The pride of the sense of doing good is more disastrous than other evils because it settles in the sense of 'I'ness. Actions and their fruits disappear but the pride settled in the sense of 'I'ness never disappears. Secondly an evil as an evil can be easily renounced. But when an evil disguises itself as a virtue it is difficult to renounce it, in the same way as we can easily discard iron hand cuffs but we find it difficult to discard gold ones because they look like ornaments. When evils are renounced by a man, the good to the entire world is automatically done by him. A person free from evil does good to the entire universe even while leading a secluded life in the Himalayan cave.

'Na kāṅkṣati'— Renunciation of desire is very important in Karmayoga. A Karmayogī does not desire any being or object or circumstance. Renunciation of desire is very much connected with the welfare of others. By rendering service to others, we get the required strength to give up desires.

In Karmayoga it is the doer who is desireless, not the action. Being inert, actions are not desireless or otherwise. All actions are dependent on the doer. The doer being desireless, his actions are called desireless. Those actions without expectation of fruit are called 'Karmayoga'. 'Karmayoga' and 'Niṣkāmakarma'—both are synonyms. 'Karmayoga' is never 'Sakāma' (with a selfish motive). The desireless doer remains detached from the fruit of action.

When actions are performed without any selfish motive, it is called Karmayoga. When actions are performed in this way, the doer becomes detached from the fruit of actions. But when he performs actions by being attached to the fruit of actions, he is bound (Gītā 5/12). When all actions are performed for the welfare of others without any selfish motive, the striver is easily set free from bondage. Therefore the doer should ever remain desireless. The more selfless he is, the more efficient practice of the discipline is there. On being totally desireless, the Karmayogī reaches consummation.

'Jñeyaḥ sa nityasaṁnyāsī'—Arjuna thought it better to live in the world even by begging than to fight (Gītā 2/5). So in response to his statement the Lord seems to clarify that such sort of renunciation apprehending the death of teachers is external (outwardly); but real renunciation consists in being free from attachment and aversion while performing actions.

Further, in the first verse of the sixth chapter also the Lord declares, "He who does not light the sacred fire is not a Saṁnyāsī." It means that the person who renounces all actions such as sacrificial fire etc., is not a Saṁnyāsī. Saṁnyāsa (renunciation) is an inward attitude by which a Karmayogī renounces his dependence on the world. Such a Karamyogī is a real Saṁnyāsī (renouncer).

Saṁnyāsa (renunciation) consists in the performance of actions without being attached to them in anyway. The striver, who has no affinity for actions, has never to reap their fruit (Gītā 18/12). Therefore, a Karmayogī, while performing all actions sanctioned by the scriptures, is ever a Saṁnyāsī (renouncer).

It is difficult to follow the Discipline of Knowledge without following the Discipline of Action. Therefore, a striver who follows the Discipline of Knowledge is first a Karmayogī and then a Saṁnyāsī (Sāṅkhyayogī). But for a Karmayogī it is not necessary to

follow the Discipline of Knowledge. So a Karmayogī is a Saṁnyāsī (renouncer) from the very beginning.

He who has renounced attachment and aversion need not go to the renounced order. When a striver resolves that any person, object, senses, mind and intellect are neither his nor for him; and he has neither attachment nor aversion to them, he is ever a renouncer. A Karmayogī while performing either the mundane or the spiritual actions ever remains detached. This detachment is real renunciation. Therefore, he should be known as one who has ever the spirit of renunciation.

'Nirdvandvo hi....sukhaṁ bandhāt-pramucyate'*— At the beginning of the spiritual discipline a striver has duality (pair of opposites). He through good company, study of the scriptures and discrimination, decides God-Realization as his aim but his so-called mind and senses etc., are naturally inclined towards pleasures and prosperity. Thus sometimes he wants to attain God, while at other times, he hankers after worldly pleasures and prosperity. His inclination changes according to the company he keeps. But he can't enjoy the worldly pleasures undisturbed because the latent impressions of good company etc., cause dispassion (disinclination for pleasures) in his mind. Thus there is a duel between pleasures and spiritual practice. Egoism hinges on this duel. When a striver has a determinate intellect only to realize God rather than to hanker after worldly pleasures and prosperity, this duel comes to an end and his egoism merges in God.

There is the duel between the pairs of opposites so long as a man derives pleasures out of the persons and objects etc. This inclination to pleasures does not let the determination for God-Realization become firm. So there is a duel. When a striver has a determinate intellect that he has to work for the welfare of others without hankering after worldly pleasures, he becomes free from the pairs of opposites.

By the expression 'Na deveṣṭi na kāṅkṣati' the Lord advises the strivers that they should be free from pairs of opposites. Hate (aversion) and desire (attachment) are the stumbling blocks to God-Realization. A man has to reap the fruit of his past actions in the form of desirable and undesirable circumstances whether he desires it or not. But it is an error that he is attached to the desirable circumstances and has aversion to the undesirable ones. As soon as this error is rectified through discrimination, he becomes free from attachment and aversion.

Secondly the self ever exists independently without the help of objects, persons and actions etc. A man (the self) (the soul) has his existence during the sound sleep also when he is oblivious of the entire world. In the wakeful and dreamy states he can exist even without any being and object. So why should he have attachment or aversion to them? By thinking so, attachment and aversion come to an end.

Attachment and aversion are perishable but a person being attached to persons and objects etc., wants to maintain them. As far as desire for God-Realization is concerned, it ever remains uniform because he (the self) is a fragment of God. But it seems to increase and decrease because of his less and more attachment to the world respectively. His desire to live, to know and to be happy is in fact the desire to attain the Truth, the Knowledge and the Bliss i.e., God. This desire constantly prevails in a human being. When attachment to the world is

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* There is description of this sort of release from bondage in the Gītā in the following expressions:– 'Shall cast off bondage of action' (2/39); 'protects one from great fear' (2/40); 'one casts off in this life both good and evil deeds' (2/50); 'shall be liberated from the evil' (4/16, 9/1); 'shall cross all sins, (4/36); 'having attained Me these great souls don't take birth here which is the place of pain and which is non-eternal' (9/28); and 'I straightway deliver from the ocean of death-bound existence' (12/7) and so on.

renounced and there is only desire for God-Realization, he becomes free from the pairs of opposites.

A striver following any one of the three paths—of action, of knowledge or of devotion must be free from the pairs of opposites. So long as there is the delusion of the pairs of opposites, a man is not liberated from the bondage (Gītā 7/27). Attachment and aversion are the enemies which are the stumbling blocks to God-Realization (Gītā 3/34). When a striver becomes free from dualities (pairs of opposites), attachment and aversion perish and then he attains God easily.

It is because of attachment and aversion that a man gets entangled in the worldly snare. All the spiritual disciplines are practised in order to wipe out attachment and aversion*. When attachment and aversion are wiped out, the ever attained Lord is naturally attained without any effort. The reason is that He is not realized through the unreal, but He is realized by renouncing the unreal. The unreal world seems to exist because of attachment and aversion. It is automatically going into extinction. So if a striver is neither attached nor has an aversion to the perishable world, he will naturally attain salvation i.e., will be released easily from bondage.

Link:–In the first half of the second verse of this chapter the Lord declared, "Disciplines of Knowledge and Action—both lead to salvation." The Lord explains the same point in the next two verses.

सांख्ययोगौ पृथग्बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।
एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यगुभयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥ ४ ॥

sāṅkhyayogau pṛthagbālāḥ pravadanti na paṇḍitāḥ
ekamapyāsthitaḥ samyagubhayorvindate phalam

The ignorant, not the wise speak of the Discipline of Knowledge (Sāṅkhya-yoga) and Discipline of Action (Karmayoga) as different. He who is well established in one, gets the fruit of both. 4

Comment:

'Sāṅkhyayogau pṛthagbālāḥ pravadanti na paṇḍitāḥ'— Arjuna in the first verse of this chapter called the method of gaining knowledge from the wise who have realized the Truth, having renounced actions, Karma saṁnyāsa. In the second verse, the Lord attaching importance to His principle, called it Saṁnyāsa and Karma saṁnyāsa. Now the Lord calls it 'Sāṅkhya'. By Sāṅkhya He means establishment in the self by discriminating the self from the body. According to Him 'Saṁnyāsa' and 'Sāṅkhya' are synonyms in which there is no need of renouncing actions physically.

Whatever Arjuna calls 'Karma saṁnyāsa' is undoubtedly a kind of 'Sāṅkhya' mentioned by the Lord because after receiving instruction from the preceptor the striver comes to know the reality about the body and the soul.

The Lord by the term 'Bālāḥ' means to convey that those, who say that Sāṅkhya (Discipline of Knowledge) and Karmayoga (Discipline of Action) produce different results, are children viz., ignorant, even though they may be aged and intellectual. But the wise say that both of them produce the same result, though they may be different as means. The Lord Himself in the third verse of the third chapter declared the twofold path—the path of knowledge and that of action—different as means but the goal is the same.

'Ekamapyāsthitaḥ samyagubhayorvindate phalam'— In the Gītā time and again it has been pointed out that the result of the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga (Discipline of Knowledge) and that of Karma-

* The only desired aim of all spiritual practices of Yogīs is to get rid of attachment to the entire world (Śrīmadbhāgavata 3/32/27).

yoga (Discipline of Action) is the same. In the twenty-fourth verse of the thirteenth chapter the Lord declares that the self or God can be perceived both by the path of knowledge and that of action. In the nineteenth verse of the third chapter it has been mentioned that a man reaches the Supreme through the Discipline of Action, while in the fourth verse of the twelfth chapter and the thirty-fourth verse of the thirteenth chapter it has been mentioned that strivers reach the Supreme by following the Discipline of Knowledge. Thus according to the Lord both of the paths lead to the same destination.

यत्सांख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।
एकं सांख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ ५ ॥

yatsāṅkhyaiḥ prāpyate sthānaṁ tadyogairapi gamyate
ekaṁ sāṅkhyaṁ ca yogaṁ ca yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati

The supreme state which is attained by the Sāṅkhyayogī is reached by the Karmayogī also. He who sees that the ways (as result) of Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga are one, he sees (truly). 5

Comment:

'Yatsāṅkhyaiḥ prāpyate sthānaṁ tadyogairapi gamyate'— In the second half of the preceding verse the Lord declared, "He who is well established in Sāṅkhyayoga or Karmayoga (performance of action), gets the fruit of both i.e., attains God-Realization." The same fact is being pointed out by the Lord here in this verse by declaring that the state which is attained by a Sāṅkhyayogī is also attained by a Karmayogī.

The Lord uses the term 'Api' (also) here to remove the doubt of those people who think that God can be realized only by the Discipline of Knowledge rather than by the Discipline of Action.

A striver through both the disciplines has to renounce his affinity for actions i.e., for active Prakṛti (Nature). A Karmayogī in order to distinguish the sentient from the insentient has to use the discrimination of a Jñānayogī even during the spiritual practice. Similarly, a Jñānayogī (Sāṅkhyayogī) has to adopt the method of Karmayoga of not performing the action for himself. A Sāṅkhyayogī's discrimination is to be utilized to distinguish the soul from the body (world); and the actions of a Karmayogī are performed in order to render service to the world. When the two strivers—one following the path of Sāṅkhyayoga and the other of Karmayoga—attain perfection, both of them reach the same destination i.e., liberation (Gītā 3/3).

The world is uneven. The closest worldly relationship is not free from this unevenness while the Lord is even and uniform. So He can be realized by renouncing the affinity for the world. There are two paths—of knowledge and of action in order to renounce this affinity. Jñānayoga (the Discipline of Knowledge) consists in thinking that the real self lacks nothing and so there is no question of any desire or attachment in the real self. By thinking so a striver gets detached. In Karmayoga a striver renders service to others with those objects he is attached to and to those persons he is attached to without any selfish motive. Thus in the Discipline of Knowledge through discrimination, while in the Discipline of Action through service affinity for the world is renounced.

'Ekaṁ sāṅkhyaṁ ca yogaṁ ca yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati'—In the first half of the preceding verse the Lord declared by negative inference, "The ignorant, not the wise, speak of the Sāṅkhyayoga and the Karmayoga as different." The same fact is being pointed out here by positive inference when the Lord declares, "He who sees that the ways (as result) of Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga are one, he sees (truly)."

Thus the gist of the fourth and the fifth verses is that the Lord regards both the Disciplines of Knowledge and Action as independent spiritual disciplines and the fruit of both is God-Realization. Those who don't know this reality are called ignorant while those who know this reality are called wise by the Lord.

An Important Fact

When a striver attains perfection in any one of the spiritual disciplines, he has neither a desire to live nor fear of death, nor desire to acquire anything or do anything.

The perishable body need not be afraid of death because it is decaying all the time while the self need not have a desire to live because it is eternal. Then who is afraid of death and who has a desire to live? The answer is that when the self identifies Itself with the body, It is afraid of death and It has a desire to live. Both of them (the desire to live and the fear of death) can be wiped out by the Discipline of Knowledge (discrimination).

The self lacks nothing; therefore, It has no desire to acquire anything and so no desire to do any work. But when It identifies Itself with the body, It feels the lack. Then It has a desire to acquire something or the other; and in order to acquire it, It has to act. The desire to acquire and to act perishes through Karmayoga.

When either the Discipline of Knowledge or the Discipline of Action attains perfection, the desires to live, to acquire and to act and the fear of death totally perish.

Link:–In the second verse of this chapter the Lord declared the Discipline of Action to be better than the Discipline of Knowledge. The Lord emphasizes the same fact in another way in the next verse.

संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः ।
योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म नचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ ६ ॥

saṁnyāsastu mahābāho duḥkhamāptumayogataḥ
yogayukto munirbrahma nacireṇādhigacchati

But the Discipline of Knowledge, O mighty-armed (Arjuna), is difficult to attain without the Discipline of Action; the sage who is earnest in Karmayoga (the Discipline of Action) quickly attains to the Absolute. 6

Comment:

'Saṁnyāsastu mahābāho duḥkhamāptumayogataḥ'— The term 'Tu' (but) has been used to explain that the Discipline of Action (Yoga) is necessary for the success of Sāṅkhyayoga (the Discipline of Knowledge), because the latter is difficult to attain without the former while the former can be practised without the latter.

A Sāṅkhyayogī's aim is to realize God. But so long as he has attachment, not to talk of God-Realization, he can't even understand the Discipline of Knowledge.

An easy way to wipe out attachment is to follow the Discipline of Action. In this

discipline all actions are performed for the welfare of others. By doing so attachment is naturally wiped out. So having wiped out attachment through this discipline, the practice of the Discipline of Knowledge becomes easy. Therefore the success of the Discipline of Knowledge is difficult without restoring to the Discipline of Action.

'Yogayukto munirbrahma nacireṇādhigacchati'— A Karmayogī, who is cautious to remain unattached and thinks of the welfare of others, has been called a 'Muniḥ' (sage).

A Karmayogī during the performance of every action whether it is significant or trifling keeps in mind that he has to perform it without any selfish motive, only for the welfare of others. By thinking so his attachment is easily renounced.

Thus the Lord explains that a Karmayogī quickly attains to the Absolute. Attachment to the world is an obstacle to God-Realization. When a striver following the path of action, works for the welfare of others, his attachment is totally renounced and with the total renunciation of attachment, God Who is ever-attained, is naturally realized. The same fact has been pointed out in the thirty-eighth verse of the fourth chapter when He declares, "He who has attained perfection by Yoga (Discipline of Action) finds the knowledge of the self i.e., God-Realization certainly and naturally." In this path there is neither any difficulty nor delay nor any need of any other means.

The second reason is that an embodied being can't abandon actions entirely; but he who relinquishes the rewards of actions is verily called a man of renunciation (18/11). It denotes that an embodied being can't renounce actions but at least he can renounce desire for the fruit of actions. Therefore, the Discipline of Action (Karmayoga) is easy to practise.

While revealing the glory of the Discipline of Action the Lord declares, "Peace immediately follows the renunciation of the fruit of actions" (Gītā 12/12); and "Such a Karmayogī is easily set free from bondage" (Gītā 5/3). Thus the Discipline of Action is easy, quick and independent means of God-Realization.

Link:–Now in the next verse the Lord describes the marks of a Karmayogī.

योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।
सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥ ७ ॥

yogayukto viśuddhātmā vijitātmā jitendriyaḥ
sarvabhūtātmabhūtātmā kurvannapi na lipyate

The Karmayogī, whose mind is quite pure who has controlled his body who has subdued his senses and whose self is the self of all beings, is not tainted by actions though he acts. 7

Comment:

'Jitendriyaḥ'— Senses are said to be subdued when they are free from attachment and aversion. When senses become free from attachment and aversion, they can't deviate the mind*. A striver can engage them in any activity as he wishes.

It is necessary for the striver who follows the Discipline of Action to subdue his senses. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa lays special emphasis

* The person, who after hearing, touching, seeing, eating and smelling, gets neither pleased nor displeased; should be known as one who has subdued his senses (Manusmrti 2/98).

on the control over the senses in the Discipline of Action as He declares—"Controlling the senses by the mind" (3/7); and "Control thy senses from the beginning" (3/41). A Karmayogī has ever to perform actions. Therefore, he can deviate from the right path if his senses are not under control. He can render selfless service to others for their welfare, only when his senses are under control.

'Viśuddhātmā'— When a person attaches importance to the worldly objects, his mind becomes impure because he has desires to acquire the worldly objects. When he has the only aim of God-Realization, his mind is purified more quickly than it is purified by any other method. Therefore, fixing of an aim plays an important role in the Discipline of Action.

'Vijitātmā'— While following the Discipline of Action a striver must renounce bodily comfort. If he engages himself in indolence and heedlessness, he will not be able to follow this discipline. So he should control his body.

'Sarvabhūtātmabhūtātmā'— A Karmayogī identifies himself with all beings.* As all the other limbs are engaged in serving an injured limb automatically without any sense of pride or doership or desire for fruit etc., so does a Karmayogī render service to others by identifying himself with them without any pride or sense of doership or desire for fruit etc.

As a person in spite of having different dealings with different limbs loves them equally, so does a Karmayogī treating the beings differently according to the scriptural and social decorums love them equally. To efface attachment, it is very necessary for him that he should identify himself with all beings.

It is in the nature of a Karmayogī to be generous. Generosity is generated when a Karmayogī identifies himself with the soul of others.

An Important Fact

Actions and objects are transitory and kaleidoscopic while we (the self) are permanent and uniform. So the actions and objects are continually abandoning us. If we abandon them, we can attain salvation or supreme peace because the two belong to two different classes. The objects and actions are to be utilizied in rendering service to others without having any pride because in fact they are theirs. This sort of service involves no effort.

We can serve others by objects and actions only on developing generosity in us. Here one point needs attention that we ourselves are generosity personified. Therefore, generosity involves neither expenditure nor effort. We should be pleased by seeing a man happy, and take pity and feel sad by seeing a man sad. Seeing a happy man we should wish every being to be happy and seeing a sad man we should wish no one to be sad.

According to the Lord, pleasure and prosperity are the two stumbling blocks to spiritual progress (Gītā 2/44). When we feel happy after seeing a man happy, our desire for pleasure perishes because we have become happy without enjoying the pleasures. Similarly, our desire for prosperity perishes because we spend the money (prosperity) and material naturally according to our best capability to remove the suffering of the sad person by being sad with him as we identify ourselves with him. In such sort of happiness or pity there is an uncommon relish which conduces a man to renounce affinity for actions and objects and then he (the self) realizes his identity with God.

'Yogayuktaḥ'— The Karmayogī. whose mind is pure, who has controlled the body, who has subdued his senses and whose self is the Self of all beings, is called

* Either get detached from one's own body or identify the body with those of others-both will bear the same fruit. A Jñānayogī gets detached from his body while a Karmayogī identifies his body with those of others. This identification makes him generous.

'Yogayuktaḥ' (devoted to the path of action).

A striver is not naturally inclined towards the spiritual discipline because his aim and his inclination are different. So long as there is importance of the world in the mind, there is struggle between the aim and the inclination. Generally a striver's aim is to realize God Who is imperishable while his inclination is towards the perishable worldly beings, objects and circumstances. When his aim and inclination are identified, the spiritual discipline is automatically practised speedily. Here the term 'Yogayuktaḥ' (devoted to the path of action) has been used for such a Karmayogī whose aim and inclination have become one i.e., God-Realization.

In Kramayoga there is no desire in the least for the fruit of actions but there is certainly an aim to be achieved. The fruit and the aim are different. An aim is one which can be ever achieved by everyone. Thus one's aim is ever God-Realization and He can be realized without any action and practice. The fruit is perishable while God is eternal. A Karmayogī does not desire the perishable because this desire is an obstacle to God-Realization. When a Karmayogī's only aim is God-Realization, he is called 'Yogayukta' (devotes to the path of action).

He who has been called 'Yogayuktaḥ' here has been called 'Yogārūḍhaḥ' (one who has attained to Yoga) in the fourth verse of the sixth chapter.

'Kurvannapi na lipyate'— A Karmayogī in spite of performing actions is not bound by actions. The sense of mine for actions, the desire for the fruit of actions, the desire for pleasure, and the sense of doership * bind a man to actions. The gist is that it is the desire to acquire something or the other which misleads a man to bondage. As a Karmayogī has no desire to acquire anything, he is not tainted (bound) i.e., his actions change into inaction.

A Sāṅkhyayogī is not bound by actions because he thinks that it is the modes which are acting on the modes (Gītā 3/28); while a Karmayogī is not bound because he performs actions for the welfare of others without any selfish motive.

The term 'Api' (even) shows that a Karmayogī remains untainted not only during the performance of actions but also during their non performance (Gītā 4/18). He has no interest in the performance or non-performance of actions (Gītā 3/18). He ever remains untainted.

It means that a Sāṅkhyayogī having renounced his affinity for the insentient, identifies himself with the sentient while a Karmayogī identifies the so-called his body, mind, senses, objects and actions etc., with the world i.e., instead of regarding them as his and for himself he regards them as the world's and for the world. With this attitude of mind, he can't have any egoistic feeling in providing comforts to others, doing good to them and performing righteous acts for them. Therefore, while performing actions, he has no sense of doership i.e., is not tainted by actions.

Link:—Having described the marks of a Karmayogī the Lord in the next two verses describes the attitude of a Sāṅkhyayogī while undertaking activities with the senses.

नैव किंचित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित्।
पश्यञ्शृण्वन्स्पृशञ्जिघ्रन्नश्नन्गच्छन्स्वपञ्श्वसन्॥ ८॥

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* The Lord while describing Karmayoga, in the forty-seventh verse of the second chapter by the expression 'Mā karmaphalaheturbhūḥ' means to say that a striver should renounce the sense of mine, the desire for pleasure and the sense of doership while by the expression 'Mā phalesu kadācana' He exhorts him to renounce the desire for the fruit of action.

प्रलपन्विसृजन्गृह्णन्नुन्मिषन्निमिषन्नपि ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥ ९ ॥

naiva kiñcitkaromīti yukto manyeta tattvavit
paśyañśṛṇvanspṛśañjighrannaśnangacchansvapañśvasan
pralapanvisṛjangṛhṇannunmiṣannimiṣannapi
indriyāṇīndriyārtheṣu vartanta iti dhārayan

The man who is united with the Divine and knows the truth believes, even though seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing, speaking, emitting, grasping, opening and closing the eyes, that he does nothing; he holds that the senses move among the sense-objects. 8-9

Comment:

'Tattvavit yuktaḥ'— Here this expression stands for the wise striver following the Discipline of Knowledge who has realized the truth that all actions are performed by Prakṛti (Nature) and he has no affinity for them, he is merely a witness of the activities of the senses.

A 'Tattvavit' (knower of the truth) is he who thinks that he (the self) is not the doer; he is different from the body, senses, mind, intellect and life-breath which perform the activities.

In fact a man (the self) is a non-doer, but by an error he regards the self as a doer (Gītā 3/27). Actually all the social, as well as individual actions are performed by the Divine power. But a man by identifying himself with the body regards its action as his action. So long as he has in the least this sense of doership, he is called a striver. But when he realizes that the Self is not at all the doer, he is called a great soul who knows the truth. As a person having awakened from sleep has nothing to do with the dream, so has a great soul, having known the truth no affinity for the actions performed by the body and the senses etc.

Such a great soul knows the truth that the self is different from the modes of nature by which actions are performed. The Self is the base and illuminator of all the objects and actions etc., It pervades everywhere and does not undergo any change while the objects and actions are kaleidoscopic. The same fact of the distinction between the Nature (Kṣetra) and soul (Kṣetrajña) has been pointed out by the Lord in the sixteenth verse of the second chapter, in the fourth and the fifth verses of the seventh chapter and in the second, the nineteenth, the twenty-third and the thirty-fourth verses of the thirteenth chapter.

'Paśyañśṛṇvanspṛśañ... unmiṣan-nimiṣannapi'— Here the five actions — seeing, hearing, touching smelling and eating pertain to the five senses (eye, ear, skin, nose and tongue) while walking, grasping, speaking and emitting, these four actions to the five organs of action*—feet, hands, tongue, genital organ and anus. Sleeping is an activity of the mind, breathing of life-breath, opening and closing the eyes of the sublife-breath named Kūrma.

Thus by mentioning the above mentioned thirteen actions the Lord has described all the actions which are performed by sense-organs, organs of action, mind, life-breath and sub life-breath. It means that all actions

* Here the description of the five organs of action has been included in four actions, i.e., within 'emitting' the actions of both the genital organ and the anus have been included.

are performed by the body, senses, mind, intellect and life-breath etc., the evolutes of Nature rather than by the self. Secondly it also denotes that a Sāṅkhyayogī can also perform other activities such as eating or drinking, business, preaching, writing, reading, hearing and thinking etc., and also other activities for maintaining the body according to his caste, order of life, nature and circumstances etc.

A man considers himself the doer of those activities, which he performs intentionally i.e., by applying his mind and intellect etc., such as reading, writing, thinking, seeing and eating etc. But there are several other activities such as breathing and opening and closing the eyes which are performed unintentionally. Then why has the Lord mentioned in this verse that a man should not regard himself as the doer of these activities? The answer is that breathing is a natural activity, yet in breath-restraint (Prāṇāyāma) etc., breathing becomes an intentional activity. Similarly, eyes can also be opened and shut intentionally. So the Lord has mentioned that a man should not hold that he is the doer. Secondly the Lord by mentioning breathing and opening and closing the eyes wants to convey that as a man during these activities thinks that he does nothing, so should he consider himself a non-doer while other activities are performed.

All the above mentioned activities can't be performed without a base (source) and an illuminator. The Lord mentions these activities in order to draw the attention of the strivers to the self, which in spite of being the base (source) and illuminator of all these activities does nothing.

'Indriyāṇīndriyārtheṣu vartanta iti dhārayan'— The question arises how actions are performed when there is no doership in the self. The Lord answers the question by declaring that actions are performed when senses move among the sense-objects i.e., the self remains the non-doer (untainted).

The term 'Indriyāṇi' (senses) includes the sense-organs, the organs of action, mind, life-breath and sub life-breath etc. There are five objects of senses — sound, touch, sight, taste and smell. The senses move among these objects. All the senses and objects of senses are the evolutes of Nature. So all the actions are performed by Nature. The Lord declares:—

"All kinds of actions are done by the modes of nature" (Gītā 3/27).

"All actions are performed by Nature alone" (Gītā 13/29).

The senses and the sense-objects, being the evolutes of the modes of nature, are called modes. So it is said, "It is the modes which are acting on the modes" (Gītā 3/28). "There is no agent other than the modes" (Gītā 14/19). It means that when it is said that actions are performed by Prakṛti (Nature) or they are performed by the modes of Nature or they are performed by the senses— these three statements are one and the same.

Nature ever undergoes modifications, while the self never undergoes modification, It ever remains free from the sense of doership. Nature can never be inactive while in the self no action is possible. The self is the illuminator of the actions while actions are subject to illumination.

'Naiva kiñcitkaromīti manyeta'—It means that the self was neither a doer in the past nor is at present nor will be in future. Nature is ever active and so all actions are performed by Nature while the self does nothing. But when the self identifies Itself with the evolute of Nature and regards the activities of Nature as Its activities, It becomes a doer (Gītā 3/27).

As a man sitting in the compartment of a moving train does not move himself but he can't remain without covering the distance covered by the train because he is seated in its compartment. Similarly, when a man assumes his affinity for the physical (gross), subtle or causal body, which are the evolutes of active Nature, he becomes the doer of the actions which are performed by them.

A Sāṅkhyayogī never assumes his affinity for the body, senses and mind etc., so he never regards himself as a doer (Gītā 5/13).

As the actions such as the growth of a boy from childhood to youth, changing of black hair into grey and white, digestion of food and weakness or strength in the body automatically take place, so does a Sāṅkhya-yogī think that all other activities are undertaken naturally and he is not their doer.

In the Gītā the person who regards himself as a doer of actions has been spoken ill of. The Lord declares,"He whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks that he is the doer" (3/27). "He who looks upon himself as the doer (agent), he of perverted mind and untrained understanding, does not see (truly)" (18/16). But the Lord praises the person who sees the self as actionless by declaring, "He who sees that all actions are performed by Nature (Prakṛti) alone and likewise that the self is not the doer, he verily sees (13/29).

The Lord uses the term 'Eva' (even) in order to convey that a striver should never think that he is a doer. By doing so his sense of doership comes to an end and his actions change into inactions. The same idea has been conveyed by the Lord in the thirty-third verse of the third chapter by the term 'Ceṣṭate' which means that his actions are nothing more than mere gestures of actions.

The second interpretation of the term 'Eva' is that even when a man identifies himself with the body and considers himself the doer, he can't be the doer. It is merely an assumption which can never come true. The Lord in the thirty-first verse of the thirteenth chapter declares,"The imperishable supreme self, though dwelling in the body, neither acts nor is tainted." "The soul residing in Nature experiences pleasure and pain" (Gītā 13/21). In spite of experiencing the modes born of nature, the man (self) ever remains the same. But he gets tainted because he has not an eye on the self.

The Self is sentient while the world including the body is insentient. So the self experiences pleasure and pain. Why? The reason is that It identifies Itself with the body (world) and experiences pleasure and pain. But if It knows Its true nature that It is imperishable, uniform and untainted while Nature in the form of the world, the body and pleasures and pains is perishable, then It can't be an experiencer of pleasures and pains etc.

An Important Fact

The Lord in the twenty-seventh verse of the third chapter declared, "He whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks that he is the doer." Here in this verse also the same fact has been pointed out by the Lord through the negative inference when He declares,"The man who is united with the Divine, and knows the truth realizes that he does nothing. Here the term, 'Manyeta' (think) does not mean 'to assume' but 'to realize'. The self remains the non-doer during the performance and non-performance of actions equally. So the great soul who has known the truth realizes that the self ever remains the same as a non-doer either during the performance or non-performance of actions. The self as the base (source) and illuminator never undergoes the least modification.

The self never lacks anything but when It identifies Itself with Nature, It feels shortage in It and so It desires objects in order to make up that deficiency. In order to fulfil that desire It becomes the doer.

No action can be performed without Nature because the instruments such as the senses and the body etc., with which actions are performed, belong to Nature. So the doer has to depend on them. As a goldsmith howsoever expert he may be can't prepare ornaments without instruments such as an anvil and a hammer etc., in the same way a doer cannot perform an action without instruments. Thus qualifications, ability and instruments—all the three belong to Nature (Prakṛti) but they appear to be in the self because of Its affinity for Nature. The instruments undergo modifications while the self ever remains the same. Therefore, they have no affinity for the self.

A man (the self) thinks that he is the doer by assuming his affinity for Nature otherwise there is no doership in him. As a Brāhmaṇa ever remains convinced that he is a Brāhmaṇa, so does a great soul, who knows the truth, believes that he is not the doer.

Link:–Having described in the seventh verse how a Karmayogī remains untainted by actions and in the eighth and the ninth verses how a Sāṅkhyayogī remains untainted, the Lord now in the next verse describes how a Bhaktiyogī remains untainted by actions.

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।
लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥ १० ॥

brahmaṇyādhāya karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā karoti yaḥ
lipyate na sa pāpena padmapatramivāmbhasā

He who performs actions, offering them to God and abandoning attachment, is not tainted by sin, just as a lotus-leaf is not tainted by water. 10

Comment:

'Brahmaṇyādhāya karmāṇi'— The body, the senses, the mind, the intellect and the life-breath bestowed by God belong to Him. Therefore, how can a devotee following the path of devotion regard the actions which are performed by the body and senses etc., as his ? He holds that all actions are being performed by the Lord for Him; he is merely an instrument in His hands.

The Lord wants to convey that it is He Who performs all actions with His senses. A striver realizing this fact should think that He is the doer of all actions.

The worldly objects such as the body etc., are not a person's own, they have been acquired and they are abandoning him. So they should be utilized in rendering service to others as offerings to God. A person cannot keep them as he wishes, neither can he change them nor can he carry them with him when he leaves the body. So it is not honesty on his part to regard them as his own. They are the Lord's and so they should be accepted as His.

A Karmayogī offers all actions and objects to the world, a Jñānayogī to Nature and a Bhaktiyogī to God. God is the master of both Nature and the world and so it is better to offer them to Him.

'Saṅgaṁ tyaktvā karoti yaḥ'— A man is said to have abandoned attachment when he has not the least attachment or attractions to beings, objects, senses, mind, intellect, life-breath and actions and has no sense of mine or desire for them.

Besides ignorance, which has been called the cause of life and death in the scriptures, in the spiritual discipline attachment to the modes is the chief cause of the embodied soul's birth in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21). Ignorance is based on attachment. Therefore, when attachment is renounced, ignorance also perishes. Desire springs from attachment (Gītā 2/62). Desire is the root of all sins (Gītā 3/37). Thus here in this verse it is mentioned that attachment which is the root of sins should be abandoned otherwise a man will go on committing sins. In case of its absence he incurs no sin.

A man's affinity for an action is not renounced so long as he derives pleasure by performing it and remains attached to its fruit, it is rather enhanced. Attachment does not consist in merely desire for fruit of action but also in being called good by others. So an action should be performed without the least desire for pleasure, comfort or honour etc. If there is desire for getting pleasure any how in the least, then that action is for one's self.

'Lipyate na sa pāpena padmapatra-mivāmbhasā'— A devotee following the Discipline of Devotion while living in the world and performing actions in order to

offer them to God, is not tainted (bound) in the same way as a lotus-leaf living in water is not tainted by water.

The desire for the world, having a disinclination for God, is the root of all sins. Desire springs from attachment. Where there is no attachment, there is no desire and so sins can't be committed without attachment.

All undertakings are covered by defects (evils) as fire by smoke (Gītā 18/48). But he who has renounced hope, desire and attachment becomes free from all defects. When actions are performed in order to be offered to God, having abandoned attachment, the striver becomes free from the stock of all sins (Gītā 9/27-28). Therefore, a Bhaktiyogī totally becomes free from sins.

Here the term 'Pāpena' (sin) stands for the fruit of past actions in the form of virtue or vice which causes the soul to be born in good and evil wombs. A Bhaktiyogī is never tainted (bound) by that fruit in the form of virtue and vice. The same fact has been pointed out by the Lord in the twenty-eighth verse of the ninth chapter when He declares, "Thus shalt thou be freed from the bonds of actions yielding good and evil fruits."

Link:–In the next verse the Lord explains how Karmayogīs (men of action) perform actions.

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।
योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये ॥ ११ ॥

kāyena manasā buddhyā kevalairindriyairapi
yoginaḥ karma kurvanti saṅgaṁ tyaktvātmaśuddhaye

The Yogīs (men of action), having abandoned attachment, perform actions merely with the body, mind, intellect or merely with the senses, for the purification of the self (heart). 11

Comment:

'Yoginaḥ'— Here the term 'Yoginaḥ' stands for Karmayogīs (men of action). The Yogīs who perform actions offering them to God are called Bhaktiyogīs while those, who perform them in order to render service to the world without any selfish motive, are called 'Karmayogīs'. A Karmayogī while performing actions regards the so-called his body, senses and mind etc., as the worlds', not his own because they have their identity with the world.

'Kāyena manasā buddhyā kevalairindriyairapi'— In fact the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., which a common man regards as his own, are not his because they have been acquired from the world and they will abandon him. So it is an error on his part to assume that they are his. All of them have their identity with the world.

If we give a serious thought to it we come to know that the body etc., are not ours in anyway. They belong either to God or to Nature (Prakṛti); or to the world. Thus it is an error to regard them as ours and to have the sense of mine (attachment) in them. The term 'Kevalaiḥ' (merely) has been used here to root out this attachment.

Here the term 'Kevalaiḥ' being plural is an adjective for senses. But it does not mean that attachment to mere senses is to be renounced, it means that attachment to the body, mind, intellect and the entire world is to be abandoned, because a person has his attachment to all of them. When a girl is married into a family her relationship with her in-laws is automatically established. In the same way, when a man is attached to any worldly object, he gets attached to the entire world. So the term 'Kevalaiḥ' should be taken as abandonment of attachment to the body, senses, mind and intellect.

In fact the doer (agent) himself should

become detached. By doing so his attachment to the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., is totally abandoned. The reason is that the body, senses and mind etc., are quite different from the self. Attachment to them is merely assumed, it is not real.

In the Discipline of Action the renunciation of the desire for fruit is important (Gītā 5/12). Common people perform actions in order to reap their fruit but a Karmayogī performs them to root out attachment to the fruit. But the person who regards the body, senses, mind, intellect and life-breath etc., as his own, can't renounce the desire for fruit* because he holds that when the body etc., are his, he should also reap the fruit of the actions performed by him. Therefore, if a striver wants to wipe out the desire for the fruit, it is indispensable for him that he should not regard the body etc., as his own.

When it rains, it is useful to the crops and people etc., but the rain is not aware of the fact that it is falling and doing good to the world. Similarly the senses should not have a sense of doership when they render service to others. But if some service is rendered by the senses, body, mind or intellect and gives us a sense of elation, it means that the service has not been performed with the feeling of detachment. On the contrary it is a sign of attachment.

'Saṅgaṁ tyaktvātmaśuddhaye'— [Vide the explanation in the tenth verse for the expression 'Saṅgaṁ tyaktvā'.]

Generally it is thought that heart is purified when sins (stored sins), volatility of the mind and ignorance are removed. But in fact purification of the heart consists in total renunciation of attachment (or the sense of mine) to the body, senses, mind and intellect. The body etc., never regard us as theirs but we assume them as ours. This assumption of mineness is impurity (filth). Saint Tulasīdāsa in the Rāmacaritamānaṣa declares,"Let the filth of the sense of mine be burnt" (7/117A). So heart gets purified when there is total renunciation of affinity of the egoistic notion and sense of mine etc.

The term 'Kevalaiḥ' denotes the aim of the renunciation of the sense of 'mine' with the body, senses, mind and intellect, while the expression 'Atmaśuddhaye' denotes the total renunciation of the sense of 'mine'. When a striver's aim is to renounce the sense of mine, still this sense prevails in its subtle form. When this sense of mine in its subtle form also totally perishes, it is known as the state of the purification of the self (heart).

The sense of mine also resides in egoism. When this sense of mine is totally renounced, egoism also becomes free from this sense of mine and the self (heart) is totally purified.

'Karma kurvanti'— A Karmayogī performs actions in order to renounce totally the sense of mine in its subtle form from the body, senses, mind and intellect etc.

So long as a person has a desire for the fruit of action and so long as he assumes that the body, senses and mind etc., are his own, he cannot be liberated from the bondage of actions. Therefore, a Karmayogī performs actions for the welfare of others without having a desire for the fruit of actions and without regarding the objects of action (body, senses, mind and intellect etc.) as his own, because for a sage who wishes to attain to Yoga, action (for the welfare of others) is said to be the means (Gītā 6/3). The more he continues working for the welfare of others, the more his attachment and sense of mine are renounced and his self (heart) is purified.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse explains the merit or glory of Karmayoga by positive as well as negative inference.

* If a person has no desire for the fruit but regards the body etc., as his own, the fruit of action becomes his motive which has been forbidden by the Lord by the declaration,"Let not the fruit of action be thy motive" (Gītā 2/47).

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम्।
अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते॥ १२॥

yuktaḥ karmaphalaṁ tyaktvā śāntimāpnoti naiṣṭhikīm
ayuktaḥ kāmakāreṇa phale sakto nibadhyate

The soul earnest (devoted) attains to everlasting peace (God-Realization), by abandoning attachment to the fruit of action; whereas he who works with a selfish motive, being attached to the fruit of actions through desire, is bound. 12

Comment:

'Yuktaḥ'— The meaning of this term is taken according to the context. In the eighth verse of this chapter the term 'Yuktaḥ' has been used for the 'Sāṅkhyayogī' who does not regard himself as a doer of actions while here it has been used for the Karmayogī who has renounced the fruit of action.

All the strivers whose aim is to attain equanimity are 'Yuktaḥ' or Yogī. In the present verse it has been used for the Karmayogī who having a determinate intellect, has renounced worldly desires.

'Karmaphalaṁ tyaktvā'— This expression means the renunciation of the desire for fruit and also renunciation of attachment because in fact it is not the fruit of actions which is renounced but it is the desire for the fruit of actions which is renounced. That fruit may be reaped either immediately or in future. When a striver regards nothing as his, does nothing for him, desires nothing for him, it means that he has renounced the desire for the fruit of actions.

A man's Prārabdha (fate) is decided by the stock of his past actions and then he is born in good and evil wombs. In human life the actions which are performed, produce impressions. But when he renounces attachment to the fruit of actions, the actions can't bear fruit like the roasted seed and they change into inaction (Gītā 4/20). Because of the effect of the actions which are performed without the desire for the fruit of actions, the latent impressions of the old actions (stock of past actions) are reduced to nothing (Gītā 4/23). Thus the cause of his rebirth melts away.

The fruit of actions is of four kinds:—
(1) Visible: – The fruit of the present actions which is visible immediately, as satisfying one's hunger after having a meal, is the visible fruit.
(2) Unforeseen:–The fruit which will be reaped in future in the form of favourable or unfavourable circumstances etc., and is now accumulated as the stock of present actions is unforeseen.
(3) Received, the fruit of past actions:–The body (with its caste, order of life) wealth, property and favourable or unfavourable circumstances which have been bestowed upon us as a result of the past deeds.
(4) Unreceived, the fruits yet to be reaped in future:–The favourable and unfavourable circumstances which we have to receive in future as ordained by destiny (Prārabdha-Karma).

Out of the four kinds of fruit of actions, the visible and the unforeseen depend on the present actions, while the received and the unreceived ones depend on the actions of the past. When a striver does not desire the visible fruit nor does he feel displeased or pleased having received it; nor does he expect the unforeseen one; nor is he attached to the received one nor does he feel happy or sad having received it and nor does he desire the unreceived one, then it is said that he has renounced the fruit of actions.

Common people perform actions with the desire for the fruit of actions and during their performance they go on thinking of that desire. As a businessman has transaction for profit and goes on thinking about the profit and he feels happy with profit and sad with loss; similarly, all people perform

actions having desire for favourable fruit such as wife, son, riches, honour and praise etc. But a Karmayogī performs actions by renouncing the desire for fruit.

Now the question arises why a man should perform actions if he has no desire. The answer is that none can ever remain for even a moment without performing actions (Gītā 3/5). Even if it is accepted that a man can abandon actions to a great degree, even then so long as he is attached to the world, he will think of the sense-objects and this is also an action. The thought of the sense-objects finally leads him to ruin (Gītā 2/62-63). Therefore, so long as a striver does not renounce the attachment totally, he can't be liberated from the bondage of actions. The old attachment is wiped out by the performance of action, while the new one does not arise when actions are performed for the welfare of others without any selfish motive.

In fact it is ignorance if actions are performed with the desire for fruit because first the actions and their fruits are perishable and secondly they will bear fruit according to the fate whether it is desired or not. A man can't have increase or decrease in fruit by mere desire.

When actions are performed for the welfare of others without the desire for fruit, affinity for them is renounced. A Karmayogī does not perform actions without an aim like an insane man but he performs them having the high aim of God-Realization. To realize his aim he works for the welfare of others. As he is not attached to the body, he performs actions promptly and scrupulously without having such evils as indolence and heedlessness.

A Vital Fact

If the actions, which are performed in order to acquire the worldly materials, are performed for the welfare of the world having the aim of God-Realization without any selfish motive, they can lead a man to God-Realization. In the twentieth verse of the third chapter it has been declared, "Janaka and others attained perfection verily by action only," while in the third verse of the sixth chapter it has been declared, "Action is said to be the means of the sage who wishes to attain to Yoga." These facts reveal that God can be realized by actions. Pārvatī and Manu-Śatarūpā etc., also realized God through the performance of actions in the form of penance. It is also mentioned in the scriptures that He can be realized through chanting, meditation, good company, study of the scriptures and cognition etc. On the contrary it is also mentioned that He can't be realized through actions such as penance etc., (Gītā 11/53). How to reconcile the two?

The answer is that in fact God is not attained through any action. He is also not a fruit of an action. God pervades everywhere, everything, incident, circumstance and person etc., all the time. He is ever-attained to everyone and everyone abides in Him only. No one can ever be separate from Him. But a man being attached to the perishable body, senses, mind, intellect and objects etc., which are the evolutes of insentient Nature, has a disinclination for God Who is his. The spiritual discipline is to be practised in order to wipe out this attachment or affinity.

Through the performance of penance etc., when this affinity for the insentient is renounced, God Who is ever-attained is attained. This affinity can be very easily renounced when actions are performed for the welfare of the world without any selfish motive.

The sentient and eternal Lord can't be bought for all the wealth of the world. All the worldly objects stand no where when all of them are compared to the imperishable Lord. Moreover a thing which is bought for a particular amount is cheaper than that amount. Thus if God is realized by performing actions, it means that He is cheaper than actions.

Here is a vital point which needs attention. Generally strivers during spiritual practice depend on and have affinity for the body,

senses, mind, intellect etc., with which they perform that spiritual activity. So long as they have affinity for them i.e., the insentient, they can't realize God. As soon as this affinity is renounced, God is realized. God-Realization is not possible through matter rather it is by snapping connection with it.

The body, senses, mind and intellect etc., belong to the same class to which the world belongs. So they should be utilized in rendering service to the world (this is Karmayoga). A striver should not accept his affinity for them nor should he depend on them beacuse he can't get rid of the unreal by having affinity for the unreal. Actions are performed without any selfish motive in order to renounce affinity for the unreal. When this affinity is totally renounced, the disinclination for God perishes and ever-attained God is realized.

Śāntimāpnoti naiṣṭhikīm'— It has stood the test of experience that when a person has neither desire for the worldly objects nor is attached to them, he attains peace. Even during sound sleep when the world is forgotten, a man experiences peace. Similarly, he attains peace when he completes any assignment or task such as the marriage of his daughter. If he renounces his affinity (desire and attachment) during wakefulness, he will attain to peace. But if he enjoys this peace, he can't attain to the everlasting peace or the supreme peace* because this peace is not an end but a means to attain to the supreme peace called Yoga (Gītā 6/3).

So long as a striver remains attached to the peace which he attains by renouncing his affinity for the world, he is bound (Gītā 14/6) and he can't attain to the supreme, uniform and eternal peace.

'Ayuktaḥ kāmakāreṇa phale sakto nibadhyate'— The term 'Ayuktaḥ' has been used for the person who works with a selfish motive. Such a person, because of his several desires, being attached to the fruit of actions, has to follow the cycle of birth and death. A person can't acquire things etc., merely by having a desire and secondly he can't possess them for ever even if he has acquired them. So it is futile to have a desire for acquiring objects etc., saint Tulasīdāsa in the Vinaya-Patrikā declares,"All the worldly objects will abandon you in the end; It is better, if you abandon them right now" (198).

It does not mean that their physical abandonment (renouncement) leads to salvation or God-Realization. Had it been so, all the persons who left their bodies (at the time of death) would have attained salvation. But it is not so. In fact it is desire, the sense of mine and attachment to them which are to be renounced because they lead to bondage i.e., to the cycle of birth and death. When actions are performed for the welfare of others, their flow is towards others and the assumed affinity for them is easily renounced.

Link:–Having dwelt upon the Karmayoga, the Lord now dwells at length upon Sāṅkhyayoga.

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।
नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ॥ १३ ॥

sarvakarmāṇi manasā saṁnyasyāste sukhaṁ vaśī
navadvāre pure dehī naiva kurvanna kārayan

The embodied (soul) who has controlled his senses, having renounced the doership of all actions mentally by discrimination in the city of nine gates, neither acting nor causing others to act, rests happily in the self. 13

* This everlasting (supreme) peace is God-Realization. It has been called 'eternal peace' (9/31) 'the supreme peace' (4/39; 18/62) and 'peace' (5/29, 2/70-71) in the Gītā.

Comment:

'Vaśī dehī'— When a man is attached to the senses, mind and intellect etc., they control him. But when he renounces attachment to them, they remain under his control. A Śāṅkhyayogī being so is called 'Vaśī.'

So long as a man has the least attachment to the evolutes of Nature (body, senses etc.), he has to remain under the control of Nature (Gītā 3/5). Prakṛti (Nature) ever remains active. Therefore, a man can't refrain himself from performing actions so long as he is attached to Nature. But a Śāṅkhyayogī who is not at all attached to the gross, subtle and causal bodies, the evolutes of Nature, does not become the doer of actions. Though such a Sāṅkhya-yogī has not the least attachment to the body, yet he is called the embodied one because he seems so to the common people.

'Navadvāre pure'— Two ears, two eyes, two nostrils, a mouth—these seven located in the upper part of the body while the genital organ and the anus located in the lower part of the trunk, these nine openings have been called the nine gates. This body has been called the city of nine gates in order to clarify the point that as the city and those who inhabit the city are different so are the body and the soul. As a person living in the city does not regard the activities which are undertaken in the city as his own, so does a Śāṅkhyayogī not regard the activities of the body as his own.

'Sarvakarmāṇi manasā saṁnyasya'— Here the expression 'Sarva karmāṇi' stands for the thirteen actions performed with the body, senses, mind, intellect and life-breath as described in the eighth and ninth verses of this chapter.

Here the expression 'Manasā saṁnyasya' means 'renouncing actions mentally through discrimination'. If the meaning of the expression is taken as 'renouncing actions mentally' only, it will not be proper because according to the Gītā 'renouncing action mentally is also an activity of the mind (Gītā 18/15). So there is doership of this mental activity. Thus it should mean the renouncement of actions mentally, by discrimination by which the affinity of doership is renounced. A Sāṅkhyayogī does not regard himself as the doer, he leaves the doership in the body.

'Naiva kurvanna kārayan'— A Sāṅkhyayogī becomes neither a doer himself nor does he make others doers. As he is not in the least attached to the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., he can't regard the actions performed by them as his. In the eighth verse of this chapter also the Lord has pointed out the same fact when He declares,"The man who knows the truth thinks that he does nothing at all." In the thirty-first verse of the thirteenth chapter also He declares,"The Supreme Self dwelling in the body does not act."

Here a doubt arises that it is true that the self does not perform actions but It can inspire others to perform actions. The clarification is that as with the rise of the sun, people are engaged in different activities such as farming, study and business etc., though the sun does not cause them to perform either prescribed or prohibited actions. Had the sun caused them to act, it would have been responsible for their virtues and sins. Similarly 'Prakṛti' gets its existence and power from God but He never causes it to act. This fact has been described by the Lord by the expression 'Na kārayan' so does Nature, having received power from God or Self, function but the self does not inspire any one to act.

'Āste sukham'— All human beings dwell naturally in the self. But they hold that they rest in the body, senses, mind, intellect and life-breath. So they can't realize the reality that they rest in the Self. But a Sāṅkhyayogī realizes that he rests in the self which is perfect and uniform and this belief involves no labour. So here the term 'Āste' (rests) has been used while in the twenty-fourth verse of the fourteenth chapter the term 'Svasthaḥ' (dwell or rest in the self) has been used.

The self is the base of all other bases

and it needs no base. This state of 'resting in the self' has also been mentioned in the twentieth verse by the expression,"Such a knower of God rests in God."

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord declared,"The embodied (soul) neither acts nor does it cause others to act." Now the question arises whether God causes others to act. The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।
न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥ १४ ॥

na kartṛtvaṁ na karmāṇi lokasya sṛjati prabhuḥ
na karmaphalasaṁyogaṁ svabhāvastu pravartate

Neither agency nor actions does the Lord create for the world, nor does He connect actions with their fruits. But it is personal nature alone that acts. 14

Comment:

'Na kartṛtvaṁ na karmāṇi lokasya sṛjati prabhuḥ'— The term 'Prabhuḥ' has been used here because the universe is created by the Lord Who is endowed with attributes. He is omnipotent and He controls the entire universe. Though He conducts the activities of the entire universe, yet He remains a non-doer (Gītā 4/13).

All actions are performed by the modes of nature but out of ignorance a man identifies himself with Nature and becomes the doer of the actions which are done by Nature (Gītā 3/27). God has not made him the doer. If He had made him the doer, the Lord in the eighth verse of this chapter would have not said—The man who is united with the Divine and knows the truth thinks, "I do nothing at all." It means that this sense of doership is self-made and so it can be renounced by the man who has inculcated it.

The Lord does not decree whether a person will have to perform a particular virtuous or evil deed. Had it been decreed by Him, the prescribed and prohibited actions mentioned by the scriptures, preceptors etc., would have been of no avail and a man would have not to bear the fruit of his past actions. The expression 'Na karmāṇi' proves that a man is independent in the performance of actions.

'Na karmaphalasaṁyogam'— A man has to reap the fruit of the actions which he performs. Actions being insentient can't decide their result. So it is ordained by God (Gītā 7/22). The Lord awards the fruit of actions but He does not bring about the union with the fruit of actions. It is the man who brings about this union. He out of ignorance, having become the doer and having been attached to the fruit of actions, has to feel happy and sad. If he himself does not get attached to the fruit of actions, he can be free from it. The term 'Saṁnyāsinām' (renouncers) in the twelfth verse of the eighteenth chapter has been used for such persons who are not attached to the fruit of actions. They have not to reap the fruits of their actions here or hereafter. If God had connected actions with their fruits, a man would have never been liberated from the fruit of actions.

In the forty-seventh verse of the second chapter the Lord declares,"Let the fruit of action not be thy motive". It means that it depends upon a man whether he feels happy or sad and whether the fruit of action is his motive or not. If the Lord had ordained the fruit of action, he would have never become even-minded in pleasure and pain and he would have never performed actions having abandoned attachment to the fruit of actions which has been emphasized by the Lord time and again in the Gītā (Vide 4/20, 5/12, 14/24 etc.).

Question:—In the scriptures it is mentioned that the Lord causes those, whom He wants to send to the higher worlds, to perform virtuous actions while He causes those whom He wants to send to the lower worlds, to perform evil actions. Thus the declaration,"Neither agency nor actions does the Lord create nor does He connect actions with their fruits," seems contrary to the ordinance of the scriptures.

Answer:—In fact the scriptures don't mean that the Lord sends them to the higher or lower worlds by causing them to perform virtuous or evil actions, but they mean that the Lord purifies them by enabling them to reap the fruit of their past actions by creating circumstances* so that they may attain God or His love.

If the scriptures are interpreted in this way that the Lord causes the people to perform virtuous or evil actions so that they may go to the higher or lower worlds, the man will become dependent in performing actions; and prescription and prohibition of the scriptures and saints and instruction of the preceptor will prove to be futile. So this interpretation does not seem to be justified.

'Svabhāvastu pravartate'— It is because of his nature that a man becomes the doer, performs actions and connects actions with their fruit. The man himself is responsible to form this nature. So long as there are attachment and aversion in nature, it is not purified; and so long as the nature is not purified, a man is over-powered by nature.

The Lord is mentioning here the same fact which he has already mentioned in the thirty-third verse of the third chapter when He declares, "Beings follow their nature."

So long as a man acts according to his nature, he will become the doer, will perform actions and will connect actions with their fruit. Thus he will remain dependent and this dependence is self-created. If a man renounces doership, actions and connection of actions with fruit (reaping of the fruit) which he has made himself, he can realize that he is untainted (uncontaminated).

Link:–When the Lord neither creates agency (doership) nor does he force any one to perform action nor does he bring about the union of the actions and their fruit, how can He reap the fruit of action? The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

नादत्ते कस्यचित्पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः ।
अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ॥ १५ ॥

nādatte kasyacitpāpaṁ na caiva sukṛtaṁ vibhuḥ
ajñānenāvṛtaṁ jñānaṁ tena muhyanti jantavaḥ

The All-pervading Lord takes neither the sin nor the virtue of any; knowledge is enveloped by ignorance; therefore, beings are deluded. 15

Comment:

'Nādatte kasyacitpāpaṁ na caiva sukṛtaṁ vibhuḥ'— The Lord Who has been called 'Prabhuḥ' in the preceding verse has been called 'Vibhuḥ' here.

A man can reap the fruit of action in two ways-by performing actions himself and by causing others to perform actions. But the Lord neither performs actions nor does He cause others to perform actions. So He has not to reap their fruit

The sun provides light to the entire universe and men commit sins and also perform virtuous actions but the sun has nothing to do with those sinful and virtuous actions. Similarly, Nature and the entire

* Being overpowered by desire a man performs good (virtuous) and bad (evil) actions (Gītā 3/37) which lead him to the higher worlds (heaven etc.) and lower worlds (hells etc.). A man has desires by making a misuse of the freedom which has been bestowed upon him so that he may attain salvation.

universe receive power from God and with that power the people perform virtuous and sinful actions. But those actions performed by the people have not the least connection with God. The Lord has given freedom to the man whether he connects actions with their fruits or offers actions and their fruit to God. He who, by misusing the freedom given by the Lord becomes the doer and reaps the fruits of actions, is bound. The Lord does not accept his actions and their fruit. But he, who by making the right use of freedom, offers his actions and their fruit to God, is liberated and the Lord accepts his actions and their fruits.

As in the twenty-fifth verse of the seventh chapter by the term 'Sarvasya' (all) and in the twenty-sixth verse of the same chapter by the term 'Kaścana' (any one), the Lord has talked about the common people, so has He described here by the term 'Kasyacit' common people who regard themselves as doer and enjoyer of fruits rather than about the devotees. As far as the devotees are concerned the Lord accepts a leaf, a flower, a fruit or a little water which is offered to Him with devotion (Gītā 9/26-27).

'Ajñānenāvṛtaṁ jñānam'— The knowledge of the self is self-evident to all the people but this knowledge is enveloped by ignorance. It is because of this ignorance that beings are deluded. He who thinks 'I am the doer' is deluded (Gītā 3/27). A man can wipe out this delusion by discrimination which has been bestowed upon him by God. Therefore, in the eighth verse of this chapter it has been said that a Sāṅkhyayogī should ever think, "I do nothing at all," while in the thirteenth verse it has been said that he should mentally renounce all actions by discrimination.

All the objects such as the body etc., are constantly undergoing change, while the self never undergoes any change. When a man identifies the self with the kaleidoscopic objects, it means that he is swayed by ignorance. But when he realizes that the self is different from the kaleidoscopic worldly materials, his ignorance is wiped out and the knowledge of the self is illumined automatically The reason is that the knowledge of the self is veiled when he assumes his affinity with the evolutes of Nature.

The term 'Ajñāna' does not mean total absence of knowledge but it means imperfect knowledge because there cannot be total absence of knowledge. The knowledge of the senses and intellect is also imperfect. When a person attaches importance to this imperfect knowledge and is influenced by it, he does not keep an eye on the real knowledge— this is known as 'enveloping of the knowledge by ignorance'.

The knowledge of intellect is more extensive than that of senses or that of mind. The knowledge of intellect illumines the knowledge of the mind and senses but it can't illumine Nature whose evolute it is. When it can't even illumine Nature, how can it illumine the sentient which transcends Nature? Thus the knowledge of intellect is imperfect.

'Tena muhyanti jantavaḥ'— The Lord by using the term 'Jantavaḥ' has condemned human beings by saying that those persons, who don't attach importance to discrimination, are in fact animals because without discrimination there is no difference between the two*. A human being is a human being not merely by virtue of human form but by virtue of his sense of discrimination. As far as sensual pleasures are concerned, even animals enjoy them. But the aim of human life is not to hanker after them, instead it is to realize the self or God Who is free from pleasure or pain. Those who know what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, deserve to be called strivers.

He who holds that he is the doer and who having the motive of the fruit of action feels happy and sad—such a man is said to

* Food, sleep, fear and sex are common between men and animals. Men are superior to animals because of their sense of discrimination. Without discrimination they are just like animals (Cānakyanīti 17/17).

be deluded out of ignorance. We are forced to do virtuous and evil actions. How can we get rid of them ? To be happy and to be sad is the fruit of our actions. How can we rise above them ? To have such conviction is delusion.

The man (self) is the non-doer and is also free from pleasures and pain. It is out of ignorance that he becomes a doer and feels happy and sad by bringing about the union with the fruit of actions. The term 'Tena' stands for this delusion (ignorance). The ignorant out of delusion feel happy and sad. The same fact has been pointed out by the expression 'Tena muhyanti jantavaḥ' (by that beings are deluded).

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord declared, "Beings are deluded because knowledge is enveloped by ignorance." The Lord explains the glory of the knowledge, which is illumined when ignorance is destroyed through discrimination in the next verse.

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।
तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ॥ १६ ॥

jñānena tu tadajñānaṁ yeṣāṁ nāśitamātmanaḥ
teṣāmādityavajjñānaṁ prakāśayati tatparam

But to those whose ignorance is destroyed by knowledge (discrimination) that knowledge lights up the supreme self like the sun. 16

Comment:

'Jñānena tu tadajñānaṁ yeṣāṁ nāśitamātmanaḥ'— The term 'Tu' (but) has been used to show that in this verse there is description of something different from the preceding verse.

Whatever was called 'Ajñānena' in the preceding verse has been called here 'Tat ajñānam' (that ignorance).

Ignorance consists in identifying the self with the body while knowledge consists in regarding them as two separate entities.

We have the egoistic notion and the sense of mine with the body and the world—this is ignorance. The self ever remains the same while the sense of 'I' and the sense of 'mine' change. In the past we were children and toys were very dear to us but now we are young or old and regard the wives, sons and riches etc., as ours. Thus we see that the sense of 'I' and the sense of 'mine' are undergoing changes while the self ever remains the same. This is knowledge or discrimination.

Thus a striver should realize this reality through discrimination and renounce the sense of 'I' and that of 'mine'. This is called destruction of ignorance by knowledge. A person identifies the uniform self with the kaleidoscopic world etc., because he does not attach importance to discrimination. The striver who having aroused this discrimination renounces the sense of 'I' and that of 'mine' with the perishable world, his discrimination lights up the supreme self i.e., he realizes God. Who is Truth-Conscious- ness-Bliss Consolidated.

'Teṣāmādityavajjñānaṁ prakāśayati tatparam'— When discrimination is fully aroused, the striver has no affinity at all for the kaleidoscopic world. Then he realizes the self, and then the Supreme-Self is lighted up i.e., the Self realizes Its identity with the Supreme-Self.

The term 'Param' here as well as in the fifty-ninth verse of the second chapter and the thirty-fourth verse of the thirteenth chapter has been used for the Supreme (Supreme-Self or God).

The term 'Prakāśayati' signifies that as in the dark the objects are not seen but they are seen when the sun rises, so is the Supreme-Self, Who is ever-attained is not realized because of ignorance. As soon as the ignorance is destroyed, the Supreme-Self is realized.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse explains how to reach the state from which there is no return.

तद्बुद्धयस्तदात्मानस्तन्निष्ठास्तत्परायणाः ।
गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः ॥ १७ ॥

tadbuddhayastadātmānastanniṣṭhāstatparāyaṇāḥ
gacchantyapunarāvṛttiṁ jñānanirdhūtakalmaṣāḥ

Those whose mind and intellect are wholly merged in God, who remain constantly established in identity with Him, and have finally become one with Him, their sins being wiped out by wisdom, reach the state from which there is no return. 17

Comment:

[God can be realized by two means. First He (The reality) can be realized by renouncing the unreal through discrimination and secondly by thirst for the real. The unreal can be attained through actions rather than through thirst. How God can be realized through thirst is explained in this verse].

'Tadbuddhayaḥ'— A striver through intellect should have a conviction that the Lord pervades everywhere. He existed before the world was created, exists now and will also exist when the world has been destroyed. This is known as merging of the intellect in Him.

'Tadātmānaḥ'— Here the term 'Ātmā' stands for the mind. When a striver resolves that only the Lord pervades everywhere, the mind automatically thinks of Him only.

'Tanniṣṭhāḥ'— When the mind and the intellect of a striver are absorbed in God, he realizes that he is naturally established in Him. But so long as the mind and the intellect don't get absorbed in God i.e., a striver does not think and resolve of His all pervasive nature, he can't realize that he is naturally established in Him.

'Tatparāyaṇāḥ' —Such strivers instead of having their separate entity become one with God. Their identity is merged in God and thus they become an embodiment of God.

Unless the striver and the spiritual practice become one, the means is not continuous. But when the striver loses his egoistic notion, his means merges in the end because both of them are identical.

'Jñānanirdhūtakalmaṣāḥ'— Through discrimination (wisdom or knowledge) between the real and the unreal, the striver gets rid of the unreal. It is because of his affinity for the unreal that he commits sins and is bound. When his affinity for the unreal is totally renounced, his sins and virtues are totally wiped out.

'Gacchantyapunarāvṛttim'— Attachment to the unreal is the cause of return. The Lord declares,"Attachment to the modes is the cause of the soul's birth in good and evil wombs" (Gītā 13/21). When our attachment for the unreal is wiped out, there is no question of our return to the mortal world.

A thing which is finite moves from one place to another. But one which is all pervasive, wherefrom it is to come and whither it is to go. God is pervading all space, time, objects, circumstances equally. He never moves and so is the case with the great souls as they have identified themselves with Him. They also don't move. The scriptures declare—The God-Realized soul here and now merges in God. His vital force does not migrate (Bṛhadāraṇyaka 4/4/6)

Regarding his so-called body it is said that he is not reborn. In fact the term 'Gacchanti' (go) stands for the knowledge of the self which immediately leads to realization of God who is ever-realized.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse describes the attitude (vision) of God-Realized souls.

विद्याविनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।
शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥ १८ ॥

vidyāvinayasaṁpanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śuni caiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ

Sages see with an equal eye a learned and humble Brāhmaṇa, a cow, an elephant or even a dog or a pariah (outcaste) and have a vision of God in all of them. 18

Comment:

'Vidyāvinayasaṁpanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini śuni caiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ'— Here two adjectives 'learned' and 'humble' have been used for Brāhmaṇa in order to show his perfection because generally a learned person is not humble, he becomes proud of his learning.

Dealings of a sage with a learned Brāhmaṇa, a pariah, a cow, an elephant and a dog must be different. The same dealings are neither proper nor possible. The scriptures also support this view. A learned and humble Brāhmaṇa, rather than a pariah is adored, milk is drunk of a cow rather than of a bitch, while an elephant rather than a dog can be used for riding. When the Lord says that sages see them with an equal eye, He means to say that they behold the Lord pervading everywhere. Therefore they don't see with an unequal eye.

Here a doubt may arise how their dealings can be different, if they have an equal eye. The explanation is that we see all the parts of our body (forehead, feet, hands and anus etc.) with an equal eye and think for their welfare, yet our dealings with them are different. When any one is touched with our feet we feel sorry and beg his pardon but we don't do so if he is touched with our arm. We show reverence to others by bowing our head and folding hands rather than feet. The hand has to be washed if it touches the anus but it is not washed if it touches the hand. Showing the forefinger and the thumb to some one, have different meanings which are known to all. In this way a man has different dealings with the different parts of the body but he loves them equally. He is not indifferent to any afflicted limb. He, through the likeness of the self, sees equality everywhere, be it pleasure or pain (Gītā 6/32). In this way the wise also have different dealings with different beings according to the difference in their food, qualities, conduct and caste etc., and it is proper also. They behold the Lord pervading everywhere and so they love all beings and think of their welfare equally without having any evil propensities such as attachment, aversion, pride and partiality etc. They have an automatic inclination to remove the sufferings of other beings and to console and comfort them in the same way as a person tries to remove the pain of any limb of his body. So it is said that they see everyone with an equal eye. The Lord has mentioned this equality of vision or even-mindedness several times in the Gītā as "He, who is equal-minded, excels" (6/9); "He sees the same everywhere" (6/29); "He, through the likeness of the self, sees equality everywhere" (6/32); "Even-minded every where" (12/4). "He who sees the supreme Lord abiding equally in all beings, never perishing when they perish, verily sees" (13/27); and "He sees the same Lord equally dwelling everywhere" (13/28).

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya declares:–

A man should be non-dual in feelings rather than in dealings (Tattvopadeśa).

An Important Fact Pertaining to Equanimity

Now-a-days, people talk a lot about equanimity. But it must be understood in the right perspective.

Equanimity is not a child's play but an embodiment of God. The Lord declares,

"Those whose minds get rooted in equanimity, overcome the world (birth and death) and realize the Absolute (God)"(Gītā 5/19). This state of equanimity is attained when others' pleasure and pain become a striver's own pleasure and pain. The Lord declares, "O Arjuna, he who through the likeness of the self, sees equality (equanimity) everywhere, be it pleasure or pain, is considered a perfect Yogī" (Gītā 6/32).

A striver attains equanimity when he is engaged in removing the sufferings of others in the same way as he gets engaged promptly in removing his own sufferings. Explaining the marks of a saint Tulasīdāsa declares:-

'Saints feel happy and sad in the happiness and sadness of others' (Mānasa 7/38/1).

So long as a man desires pleasures, he can't attain equanimity in spite of his best efforts. But when he has a keen desire to provide comfort to others, to do good to them and he thinks for their salvation, he becomes equanimous. A striver should begin this activity with his family. He should try his best to remove the suffering of his parents, wife, sons and other near and dear ones even if he himself has to suffer. By doing so he will attain peace. Similarly, he should try to remove the sufferings of others. By doing so he will be thrilled with joy. We should serve those to whom we are not attached or we should renounce our attachment to those whom we serve – the result will be the same.

Saint Tulasīdāsa in the Mānasa declares, "Lakṣmaṇa serves Lord Rāma and Sītā with the same zeal as that with which an ignorant man serves his body" (2/142/1).

It is not wise to serve one's own body because even an animal does so. A mother monkey loves its young one so much that it does not leave the young one even when the latter dies. But when someone gives it any eatable, it eats itself without giving it to its young one. Even if the young one tries to eat, the mother frightens the young one away. So long as attachment is there, equanimity is out of the question.

We should serve others in a disinterested manner. If any one goes astray, we should guide him in a cheerful spirit to follow the right path. By doing so we shall feel peace and happiness. If we don't guide him, we can't experience peace. Let any one try it and see. Similarly if we invite a thirsty person to come and have a drink of cold water, it gives us satisfaction and peace of mind. This kind of happiness or peace leads us to salvation while the desire to seek pleasure leads us to degradation. In the same way when religious discourses are arranged, we should politely request the people to take their comfortable seats so that they may listen to the discourse properly instead of commanding them in an authoritative tone. By doing so we shall derive satisfaction and peace. But if we command them in an authoritative tone, it will reveal our pride which will prick others and we shall not be able to attain peace. By this kind of behaviour we can never attain equanimity.

Those who are engrossed in the welfare of all beings attain the Lord (Gītā 12/4) because He is the disinterested friend of all beings (Gītā 5/29). It is He Who rears all beings whether they are believers or non-believers. Water quenches the thirst of both the staunch believers and the staunch non-believers, the sun provides light to the two, air helps everyone to breathe and the earth provides room to everyone without any distinction, whether they believe in God or not. Thus everybody has an equal share in the things created by God.

Equanimity or equality does not mean that food should be eaten and marriages should be arranged without taking into consideration caste, creed or colour etc. Equality in such dealings leads to degradation. It is the god of death who has equal dealings with all because all the beings whether they are saints or house-holders, animals or gods have to die.

Animals also have equality of dealings. A dog enters a Brāhmaṇa's kitchen with unclean feet in the same way as it enters the kitchen of a sweeper because it does not distinguish between a Brāhmaṇa and a sweeper. But the same behaviour on the part of a man can't be ignored. Equanimity consists in removing the sufferings of others and in doing good to others. This kind of equanimity purifies him

and his heart. But if he does not observe purity in food etc., his heart gets impure which leads to disquietude. Only outward dealing of equality is against the ordinance of the scriptures and decorum of the society, and it causes struggle in the society.

The scriptures don't support the view that the Brāhmaṇas (priest class) are high by caste while the Śūdras (labour class) are low. The Brāhmaṇas through preaching, the Kṣatriyas (the warrior class) through protection (heroism), the Vaiśyas (the trading class) through trade and the Śūdras (the labour class) through physical labour should serve the members of all the castes. But it does not mean that the members of other castes should not do physical labour while performing their duty. All of them should labour equally during the performance of their duty. Everyone should render service to others and co-operate with them with all the resources he possesses.

In the past, people followed the Varṇa (caste) system and Āśrama (order of life) system and led a happy and peaceful life. But today the Varṇa-Āśrama system is being replaced by factions and groups. In villages people can't even get water because the owners of the wells don't allow those people, who support the candidates of the rival parties, to draw water from their wells. Among the members of the same family also there are feuds because they support different parties. How miserable the condition is !

If we want to attain equanimity, we should try to remove the sufferings of others whether they belong to our caste, order of life, religion or sect etc., or not and should also do good to them. They may be the devotees of Lord Rāma or Lord Kṛṣṇa or Lord Śiva or they may be Muslims or christians etc., we should think of their welfare. We should never be partial to the people of our own caste or creed or group etc., nor should we feel happy and sad when our own group or creed gets victory or defeat over the rival group or creed etc. We should help them and satisfy their needs to the best of our capacity and resources without having the feelings of envy, jealousy, hatred and pride etc., upliftment is possible through righteous feelings, virtues and good conduct. Moreover, we should have the feelings that all beings should be happy, all of them should be free from diseases and no one should ever suffer in the least. Having such sort of feelings we should do good to others– this is equanimity.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord explains the glory of equanimity.

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।
निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद्ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥ १९ ॥

ihaiva tairjitaḥ sargo yeṣāṁ sāmye sthitaṁ manaḥ
nirdoṣaṁ hi samaṁ brahma tasmādbrahmaṇi te sthitāḥ

Even here the world is overcome by those whose minds are established in equality because God is flawless and equal. Therefore, they are established in God (Brahma). 19

Comment:

'Yeṣāṁ sāmye sthitaṁ manaḥ'— When a person realizes that he is established in God or the Self and when he renounces attachment, aversion, desire and unevenness of mind etc., his mind and intellect naturally get established in equanimity. Though outwardly there is no obvious difference in the dealings of a great soul and a common man, yet inwardly there is a lot of difference. The mind of a great soul remains equanimous, flawless and quiet, while that of a common man remains uneven, defective and disquiet.

In the morning when the sun rises, it is not seen in the east if it is hidden behind the high mountains in that direction, but it's light can be seen on the top of a high mountain in the west.

It shows that the sun has risen, even if it is not visible in the east. Similarly, those, whose minds and intellects remain untainted by honour and dishonour, praise and blame, pleasure and pain etc., and are free from attachment, aversion, joys and sorrows, are naturally established in the self. The reason is that for a person without being established in the self it is impossible to maintain evenness of mind and intellect.

'Ihaiva tairjitaḥ sargaḥ'— Here the plural has been used in the term 'Taiḥ' (by those) by the Lord to explain that all men can realize God and can conquer the entire world.

The expression 'Iha eva' means that even here during the life time in this world they can conquer the world i.e., can be liberated from this world.

The body, senses, mind, intellect, beings, objects, incidents and circumstances etc., are different from the self. He who depends on them is dependent. He who attaches importance to them, and desires them remains dependent i.e., is defeated. But when he renounces attachment to them and sincerely gives up desire for them, it means that he has overcome them. Till slavery to desire persists, he is the vanquished one.

Only a defeated person wants to defeat and subdue others. In fact no one can defeat others without defeating himself. For example if a king or a scholar wants to defeat others, he will have to resort to his army, capability, learning, wisdom etc.

A man becomes dependent as soon as desire is born. This dependence remains as it is, whether the desire is satisfied or not. When the desire is not satisfied a person remains dependent for want of the object of his desire. But when the desire is satisfied, he depends upon the object, he has acquired though he does not realize this dependence because his intellect is veiled by ignorance. He rather feels himself to be independent.

The wise man becomes totally independent because he has no desire at all and such a man is victorious, though he has no desire to overcome others. He needs nothing in the world, while the world needs him.

Such an equanimous great soul who has overcome the world is not tempted by the biggest mundane pleasure and is not shaken even by the heaviest sorrow (Gītā 6/22).

He has not the least desire for any beings, objects and circumstances etc. Though he knows the desirable and the undesirable circumstances and also makes effort to be free from the undesirable ones, yet they have no effect on his mind.

'Nirdoṣaṁ hi samaṁ brahma'— All the flaws and heterogeneity are found in a man because of his affinity for Nature. But God is flawless, equanimous and unattached because He remains untainted by his affinity for Nature.

'Tasmādbrahmaṇi te sthitāḥ'— God is flawless and equanimous. Therefore, the great souls whose minds are flawless and equanimous are established in God.

When a man is attached to the kaleidoscopic and unreal world, all the flaws and heterogeneity are born. As the great souls do not attach any importance to the unreal, they remain flawless and equal and so they remain established in God. As where there is smoke there must be fire because without fire smoke is not possible; so are those, whose minds are established in equality, established in God because without being established in God, full equanimity (equality) is not possible.

When a man himself gets established in God or equanimity, his mind is also established in equanimity. It is only when they have attained the state of equanimity that the great souls are said to have attained God-Realization or equanimity. This equanimity has been called Yoga in the Gītā (2/48). According to the Gītā this attainment of equanimity is regarded as perfection of human life.

This topic of Jñānayoga (the Discipline of Knowledge) was started in the thirteenth verse. The term 'Jantavaḥ' (beings or animals) used in the plural number in the fifteenth verse continued upto this nineteenth verse. The Lord by using the plural number means to explain that all those people who are deluded can attain God-Realization. But in the present verse the term 'Brahmaṇi' has been used in the singular number, which means that all people attain

the same God. Every person whether he is a Brāhmaṇa (member of the priest class) or a pariah attains the same Lord Who was attained by great sages such as Sanaka etc.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse explains how to get established in God (the Absolute) and what are the marks of such a sage who gets established in Him.

न प्रहृष्येत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत्प्राप्य चाप्रियम्।
स्थिरबुद्धिरसंमूढो ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मणि स्थितः॥ २०

na prahṛṣyetpriyaṁ prāpya nodvijetprāpya cāpriyam
sthirabuddhirasammūḍho brahmavid brahmaṇi sthitaḥ

He who neither rejoices on obtaining what is pleasant nor grieves on obtaining what is unpleasant and who is firm of understanding and unbewildered (undeluded), such a knower of God is established in God. 20

Comment:

'Na prahṛṣyetpriyaṁ prāpya nodvijetprāpya cāpriyam'—To get agreeable beings, objects, incidents and circumstances appealing to the body, senses, mind, principles, caste, creed and scriptures is called acquisition of 'Priya' (agreeable) and what is contrary to it is 'Apriya' (disagreeable). When a striver obtains pleasant (desirable) beings, objects, and circumstances etc., according to his desire, he should not feel happy. Similarly, when he meets with unpleasant ones, he should not be sad. He knows the desirable and the undesirable ones but he is neither attached to the desirable nor has an aversion to the undesirable. Mere knowledge of the agreeable and disagreeable is not a flaw. He remains free from joy or grief.

The mind knows the desirable (pleasant) and the undesirable (unpleasant) while the agent (doer) becomes happy and sad. Though all actions are performed by the modes of Nature yet he whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks, "I am the doer," and feels happy and sad. But he who knows the true character of the Self (soul) and the modes of Nature, understands that it is the modes which are acting on the modes (Gītā 3/28). So he knows that he is not the doer and thus there is no question for him (the self) to be happy or sad.

'Sthirabuddhiḥ'—The self can be known by the self without the help of the instruments such as the body, senses, mind and intellect etc. The knowledge which is acquired with mind and intellect etc., is imperfect as it is neither permanent nor certain (doubtless). But the knowledge of the self is permanent, uniform and certain. The great soul who has realized this knowledge of the self, has such a balanced and firm mind that there remains neither any doubt nor option nor contrary feelings in it. So he is called 'Sthira buddhiḥ' (one with firm intellect or understanding).

'Asammūḍhaḥ'—Common deluded people do not behold the omnipresent Lord ever-pervading everywhere, they hold that the world (which is really transitory and unreal) is real. But the undeluded are those who are completely free from such belief.

'Brahmavit'—God cannot be realized by a person who does not identify himself with Him. But when he identifies himself with Him without having any separate entity, he realizes Him. In God-Realization the liberated soul, the means and God, all the three become one. There remains no trio, only realization remains. In fact 'who has realized God— this can't be explained. The reason is that such a liberated soul becomes one with God (Brahma). But he has not the least pride of his achievement that he has realized God.

'Brahmaṇi sthitaḥ'—In fact all beings are essentially and constantly established in Brahma (God) but by an error they hold

that they are established in the body, senses, mind and intellect etc. So they can't realize the truth that they are established in Him. But a great soul in all circumstances realizes that he is established in Him naturally and constantly.

An object is established in another object. But establishment in God is distinct from it. When a great soul identifies himself with God, only God remains, he completely loses his separate entity. So long as he thinks that he is established in Him, it means that he has not fully identified himself with Him, and he still has his individuality.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse describes the means of attaining the state of mind of the person who is established in God.

बाह्यस्पर्शेष्वसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत्सुखम्।
स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ॥ २१ ॥

bāhyasparśeṣvasaktātmā vindatyātmani yatsukham
sa brahmayogayuktātmā sukhamakṣayamaśnute

When the soul (self) is no longer attached to external contacts (objects), he finds happiness in the self. Having completely identified himself through meditation with Brahma (God) he enjoys eternal bliss. 21

Comment:

'Bāhyasparśeṣvasaktātmā'— He who, instead of being attached to the body, senses, mind, intellect, life-breath etc., as well as to the objects of senses, such as sound and touch etc., is attached only to God, is known as unattached to external contacts. The strivers whose attachment has not been totally wiped out but whose aim has been to wipe it out, should also be included among those strivers who have renounced attachment as they quickly get rid of it because of their firm resolve (aim).

This detachment is necessary in order to attain the state mentioned in the preceding verse in which a striver neither rejoices on obtaining what is pleasant nor grieves on getting what is unpleasant.

So long as a man is attached either to the external objects etc., or internal mind etc., he can't realize the self. All these objects and mind etc., constantly undergo change but because of attachment to them a man has not an eye on their kaleidoscopic nature but derives pleasure out of them. But in fact they can't provide pleasure; it is renunciation of affinity for them which provides pleasures. Therefore, a man feels pleasure in sound sleep when he forgets his affinity for these objects.

A man has a wrong notion that he can't live without external contacts but in fact he can't live with constant external contacts. To forget all external contacts he sleeps. Thus he regains freshness, vitality and health, which he can never get in the wakeful state. Therefore he considers sleep very essential. Energy is procured through dissociation with objects.

When a man goes to bed he thinks to renounce his affinity for the external objects and also to work after waking from sleep. As he attaches more importance to the work he does not pay attention to the renunciation of his affinity for objects. He sleeps and awakes having affinity for objects.

It is very surprising that the person who was our relative does not live i.e., he dies but our affinity for him continues. The reason is that the assumed affinity can be wiped out only when the person who has assumed it renounces it. As soon as he renounces it, he attains salvation which is natural.

The affinity with external objects is unreal

while our affinity with God is real. A man assumes his affinity with external objects in order to derive pleasure out of them. But it results in sufferings (Gītā 5/22). By realizing this fact attachment to external objects is wiped out.

'Vindatyātmani yatsukham'—When attachment to the external objects is wiped out, a striver finds happiness of the mode of goodness. The happiness derived out of the affinity for the external objects is of the mode of passion. A person goes on enjoying this Rājasa (of the mode of passion) happiness so long as he does not gain Śāttvika (of the mode of goodness) happiness. When he ceases attachment to the Rājasa happiness he gains Sāttvika happiness.

'Sa brahmayogayuktātmā'—As soon as attachment to the world is wiped out, the striver identifies himself with Brahma (God). As with the disappearance of darkness light is revealed, so when attachment to the world is wiped out, the striver is identified with Brahma (God). Both happen simultaneously. Yet disappearance of darkness is prior to illumination of light— it is deemed so. Similar is the case with effacement of attachment and establish- ment in God. In the first verse of the thirteenth chapter there is the description that the knower of the field (the self) is different from the field (body) while in the second verse there is the description that the self has Its identity with the Supreme Self. Similarly, here in this verse by the expression 'Bāhya sparśeṣvasaktātmā' (with the self unattached to external contact) there is description that the self is different from the body and the world while by the expression 'Brahma yogayuktātmā' there is the description of the identity of the self with God.

Having become detached from pleasure and having found Sāttvika happiness, a striver may have the subtle egoistic notion by thinking 'I am happy', 'I am wise', 'I am flawless', 'I have no duty to perform' and so on. In order to get rid of this subtle egoistic notion it is necessary that the striver should identify himself with God totally, otherwise he can't remain totally free from the sense of individuality.

'Sukhamakṣayamaśnute'—So long as a striver goes on enjoying the Sāttvika pleasure, he has egoism (attachment) in subtle form. But when he ceases to enjoy this Sāttvika happiness, his egoism totally perishes and he realizes God Who is sentient, uniform and imperishable. This is known as eternal bliss. This is also known as infinite bliss (6/21); (6/28), absolute bliss (14/27) and so on. Having attained this eternal bliss there is natural attraction for God, and this attraction is known as the supreme devotion (Gītā 18/54). This devotion ever increases i.e., the Lord seems to be revealed in new forms to such a devotee. In this connection there is a point which needs attention. If the striver thinks that the devotion was imperfect in the past but now it has attained perfection, it means that the striver has not attained perfection, he is an aspirant still. But if in spite of perceiving novelty in the Lord he feels that his devotion was supreme in the past also, it means that he has attained perfection.

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord declared, "When a person is not attached to external contacts, he attains eternal bliss." In the next verse He explains how to renounce attachment to sense-objects.

ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते ।
आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः ॥ २२ ॥

ye hi saṁsparśajā bhogā duḥkhayonaya eva te
ādyantavantaḥ kaunteya na teṣu ramate budhaḥ

The pleasures that are born of contacts (with objects) are only sources of pain, they have a beginning and an end, O son of Kuntī (Arjuna), no wise man delights in them. 22

Comment:

'Ye hi saṁsparśajā bhogāḥ'— The pleasure is derived out of the contact of senses, with their objects—sound, touch, colour, taste and smell. A man also derives pleasure out of honour, praise, beings, objects, circumstances etc. Man is not free in acquiring sense-objects. If some body eulogizes the doctrines we respect, we feel happy—that is also a sort of enjoyment. It means to derive pleasure through beings, objects, circumstances and states by body, senses and mind is known as 'Bhoga' (enjoyment).

Not only the forbidden pleasure but the pleasures which are sanctioned by the scriptures must also be renounced because they are obstacles to God-Realization. Pleasure can be derived only by having affinity for the insentient (matter) while it is a must to renounce affinity for the insentient (matter) to attain God-Realization.

'Ādyantavantaḥ'— All the pleasures have a beginning and an end, they are impermanent, kaleidoscopic (Gītā 2/14) and insentient while the self is permanent, unaltered and sentient. The sense-objects have never identity with the self. Therefore, the self can't gain happiness from pleasures. The self is a fragment of God (Gītā 15/7). Therefore, It can attain eternal bliss from God (Gītā 5/21).

As soon as a person realizes that these pleasures have a beginning and an end, are transitiry and fleeting, the effect of pleasure and pain is lessened for him. Therefore the expressison 'Ādyantavantaḥ' is a panacea to root out the effect of pleasure.

'Duḥkhayonaya eva te'— All the pleasures born of contacts are only sources of pain. Pleasure is born of pain and ends in pain because a man feels happy having acquired the thing which he lacked and again feels sad having lost it. He enjoys happiness after acquiring the object in proportion to his sadness.

A voluptuous person can't escape pains or sorrows because sensual pleasures can be enjoyed by having affinity for the insentient (matter); and this affinity for the insentient is the cause of great suffering in the form of birth and death.

In the 'Pātñjalayogadarśana' it is mentioned, "A wise man does not indulge in pleasures because they result in three kinds of pains. These pains are named 'Pariṇāma duḥkha' (pain as result) 'Tāpa duḥkha, (affliction) and 'Saṁskāra duḥkha' (pain in the form of impression) as result, affliction and latent impressions. Moreover, the contradictions in the modes of nature also result in pain.

Sensual pleasures which appear like nectar at first are like poison in the end (Gītā 18/38) because in enjoying them energy and the objects are lost. So they result in pain. This is 'Pariṇāma duḥkha.'

When a person beholds others enjoying those pleasures which he can't enjoy, because he does not possess those objects, or when he is afraid to lose them or when he is incapable of enjoying them in spite of his attachment to them, he is filled with grief in spite of the fact that the objects are available to him. This is 'Tāpa duḥkha'. He remembers the lost pleasures — this is pain in the form of latent impressions. This is called 'Saṁskāra duḥkha'.

A person wants to enjoy pleasures because of his inclination to them but his discrimination checks him from enjoying them. Similarly, while listening to the divine discourses because of the mode of ignorance, he feels sleepy and wants to derive pleasure from sleep. But because of the mode of goodness he thinks that he should avail himself of such golden opportunities which are very rare. Thus there is contradiction in the modes of nature and this contradiction is very painful for strivers.

In the enjoyment of pleasures a person is dependent because they can be enjoyed according to one's fate while he is independent in God-Realization because this human body has been bestowed upon him only to attain Him. Pleasures can't be enjoyed equally even by two persons while God can be realized by everyone in this

Kali-age as He was realized in the Satya age by great sages. Pleasures can't be enjoyed for ever by all persons while God can be realized for ever by all persons. It means that there is a difference in acquiring pleasures i.e., all people can't acquire pleasures. But there is no difference as far as renunciation of pleasures is concerned, all can renounce pleasures.

The term 'Eva' means that pleasures are doubtlessly and certainly sources of pain. There seems to be happiness in them but in fact there is not the least happiness in them.

'Na teṣu ramate budhaḥ'—A wise man unlike a common man does not delight in pleasures because he regards them as the sources of pain. He does not become a slave to them.

A wise man knows that all the sorrows, sufferings, sins and hells etc., depend on the desire for pleasures. Therefore, he who attaches importance to this knowledge, is wise. He who knows that the pleasures are sources of pain, yet, desires them and delights in them does not deserve to be called wise because a wise man neither desires them nor takes delight in them.

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord declared, "The pleasures born of contacts are only sources of pain." Then the question arises who is happy. The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

शक्नोतीहैव यः सोढुं प्राक्शरीरविमोक्षणात् ।
कामक्रोधोद्भवं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः ॥ २३ ॥

śaknotīhaiva yaḥ soḍhuṁ prākśarīravimokṣaṇāt
kāmakrodhodbhavaṁ vegaṁ sa yuktaḥ sa sukhī naraḥ

He, who is able to resist the impulse (rush) born out of desire and anger, even here before he gives up his body, is a Yogī and he is a happy man. 23

Comment:

'Śaknotīhaiva yaḥ soḍhuṁ prākśarīravimokṣaṇāt kāmakrodhodbhavaṁ vegam'— Every being possesses discrimination but it remains latent in birds and beasts etc. They know only how to maintain their body. In the life of gods etc., this discrimination remains concealed because they aim at the enjoyment of pleasures. In human life also the discrimination of those who hanker after pleasures and prosperity, remains veiled but time and again their sense of discrimination makes them realise that pleasures and prosperity result in pain and sins. A person remains entangled in them because he does not attach importance to discrimination. Therefore, a person by attaching importance to discrimination should make it a permanent feature; and he has no restriction in doing so. By doing so he can be free from evil propensities such as attachment, aversion, desire, anger etc. Therefore, by using the term 'Iha' (here) (in this world) the Lord exhorts human beings to resist the impulses of desire and anger so that they may be happy for ever by controlling them.

This human body has been bestowed upon us so that having controlled the impulse of desire and anger we may attain salvation. Every human being without any distinction of caste, colour or creed etc., is qualified and deserving in controlling them.

A man may die any moment. So he should be ever cautious not to be swayed by desire and anger but he should control them here in this life before giving up the body. Secondly it can also be interpreted that before the body starts functioning under their sway, they should be controlled.

As soon as the thought of hankering after the pleasure comes to the mind, a striver

should become alert that he is a striver and so it is not proper for him to get entangled in pleasures. He should immediately renounce this thought.

It is because of attachment to objects that they are charming and pleasant— such thoughts crop up. These thoughts give rise to desire to acquire them and we get angry with the person who creates obstacles in their acquisition.

As soon as the thought of desire and anger comes to the mind, it should be renounced otherwise, afterwards it becomes very difficult to control these urges. As soon as their thought is born, there are disquietude, excitement and struggle etc., in the mind. So such a man can not be happy. But when he resists these impulses, he becomes happy. Sometimes a person can control these impulses out of fear in the presence of another man who is more powerful, than he. Similarly, he can control them out of greed in business etc., in order to earn money. But this sort of control can't make him happy because in such cases instead of getting entangled in desire and anger, he gets entangled in fear and greed. Moreover, the person who resists the impulses of desire and anger, has been called a Yogī. But no one becomes a Yogī who has not renounced thoughts (Gītā 6/2). Therefore, for a striver it is better to renounce the thought as soon as it comes to the mind rather than to resist the impulses of desire and anger.

A striver can control desire and anger by realizing the fact that they are not in him because he (the self) is permanent while they are transitory. Secondly how can they be in him when he knows that he is different from them? Thirdly, a person can be free from desire and anger (Gītā 5/26); (Gītā 16/22) but only he who is already free from them can be free. Fourthly, the Lord has called desire and anger (the gross forms of attachment and aversion) the modifications of nature (Gītā 13/6). So they remain in nature (Prakṛti) not in the self because the self does not undergo any modification. Thus desire and anger don't abide in the self. He who considers them abiding in the self, invites them to overcome him.

'Sa yuktaḥ naraḥ'— The Lord in the fifteenth verse of this chapter has called such persons 'Jantavaḥ' (animals) whose knowledge is veiled by ignorance. Here He has called the person, who controls the impulses of desire and anger, 'Naraḥ' (man). It means that only he who has controlled these urges deserves to be called a man, otherwise he is just like an animal.

He who remains established in equanimity is called a Yogī. He who by attaching importance to discrimination is not swayed by desire and anger, can be established in equanimity (even- mindedness).

'Sa sukhī'— Not to talk of men, even birds and beasts can't lead a happy and peaceful life if they are swayed by desire and anger. So only the man who has controlled these impulses is happy, otherwise evils such as disquietude, volatility and struggles are born and a man can't be happy. A person who depends on the perishable persons and objects etc., and who wants to derive pleasure out of them by having affinity for them can never be happy—this is a rule.

Link:–Having described the sad plight of the person who is swayed by desire and anger, the Lord in the next verse explains the glory of the person who is happy within himself.

योऽन्तःसुखोऽन्तरारामस्तथान्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः ।
स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥ २४ ॥

yo'ntaḥsukho'ntarārāmastathāntarjyotireva yaḥ
sa yogī brahmanirvāṇaṁ brahmabhūto'dhigacchati

He who is happy within himself (God), who rejoices within himself and who is illumined within himself, that Yogī (Sāṅkhyayogī) identified with Brahma attains to the beatitude of God (Brahma nirvāṇa). 24

Comment:

'Yo'ntaḥsukho'ntarārāmas-tathāntarjyotireva yaḥ'— 'Antaḥ sukhaḥ' (one who is happy within himself) is he who instead of being happy in possessing the worldly objects, is happy only in God. Besides God none is his object of happiness. He constantly relishes God.

He constantly remains happy within himself and so he needs no outwardly (external) objects etc. He remains happy within himself because the self can't inflict pain upon the self and the self can't have disinclination for the self.

The outwardly or external objects etc., can't be acquired by everyone for ever while the internal self can be attained by everyone for ever.

'Antarārāmaḥ'— (One who rejoices within himself) is he who instead of rejoicing in external pleasures, rejoices in the self or in God during spiritual practice as well as in practical life.

The Lord is the illuminator and base of all the mundane knowledge of senses and intellect etc. 'Antar jyotiḥ' is the striver who ever remains illumined.

The mundane knowledge has a beginning and an end while the knowledge of God constantly remains the same without undergoing any change at all. A Sāṅkhya-yogī naturally possesses the knowledge that only God pervades everywhere.

'Sa yogī brahmanirvāṇam brahma-bhūto'dhigacchati'—A striver following the path of Sāṅkhya (knowledge) realizes that he is established in Brahma (God) which shows his egoistic notion because he holds 'I am liberated' 'I am established in Brahma (God).' So long as this egoistic notion prevails, it means that he is not a God-Realized soul i.e., he has not attained perfection. So such a striver should not be satisfied with this state.

The expression 'Brahma nirvāṇam' means the attainment of Eternal Peace without the least disquietude.

When a Sāṅkhyayogī identifies himself with God, only God remains, he does not maintain his separate entity in the least, he attains perfection or God-Realization. In 'Brahma bhūta' state a striver realizes that he is identified with Brahma. But when his egoistic notion (individuality) perishes none remains to realize this identification. He himself becoming Brahma (God) attains to Brahma (God).

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord explained the glory of a Sāṅkhyayogī who remains happy within himself. In the next verse He explains the glory of the Sāṅkhya-yogīs who are actively engaged in the welfare of all beings.

लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकल्मषाः ।
छिन्नद्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ २५ ॥

labhante brahmanirvāṇamṛṣayaḥ kṣīṇakalmaṣāḥ
chinnadvaidhā yatātmānaḥ sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ

The holy men whose sins are destroyed, whose doubts (dualities) are cut asunder, whose minds are disciplined and who rejoice in doing good to all beings attain to the beatitude of God. 25

Comment:

'Yatātmānaḥ'—The strivers, whose aim is God-Realization, have not to control their minds, bodies, senses and intellects but they

are instinctively and easily controlled. When they are controlled, the strivers become free from evils such as attachment and aversion and all their activities are for the welfare of others.

So long as a striver regards the body, senses, mind and intellect as his and for him, they are not controlled by him; and they have such evils as attachment, aversion, desire and anger etc. So the striver is controlled by them. Therefore, a striver should not regard them as his and for him. By doing so they come under his control. Here the expression 'Yatātmānaḥ' has been used for those cautious and alert strivers who do not regard the body, senses, mind and intellect as theirs and who consider them different from the self.

'Sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ'—Egoistic notion is the main stumbling block for a striver following the Sāṅkhyayoga in the way of God-Realization. By effacing egoism in order to realize automatic identity with God it is necessary to have the sentiment of the welfare of all beings. Those who rejoice in the welfare of all beings can easily wipe out the egoistic notion.

He who wants to identify himself with the all pervading Lord must remain careful about the welfare of all beings. As a person is careful about the welfare of all the parts of his body which have different shapes, names and functions, so does a striver think and work for the welfare of all beings without any distinction of caste, creed, colour, order of life and spiritual practice etc. He beholds the Lord pervading every being equally. Therefore, when a person gets engrossed in the welfare of all beings, his selfishness easily comes to an end and he realizes his identity with God.

'Chinnadvaidhā'—So long as a striver has not a firm resolve to realize God, he has duality in his mind. But when he has a firm resolve, his doubt or duality disappears and he is promptly engaged in spiritual practice.

'Kṣīṇakalmaṣāḥ'—The affinity for nature (Prakṛti) is the root of all sins and evils. When a striver realizes that he (the self) is different from nature and its evolutes such as body, senses, mind and intellect etc., he naturally becomes free from all sins and evils.

'Ṛṣayaḥ'— The term 'Ṛṣ' means knowledge. He who attaches importance to knowledge (discrimination) is a 'Ṛṣi' (sage or holyman). In the olden days the sages attained God-Realization by leading a house-holder's life. In this verse also there is the description of those strivers who practise spiritual discipline with discrimination in order to realize God while performing mundane duties. Therefore, the strivers who attach importance to their discrimination are also sages (holymen).

'Labhante brahmanirvāṇam'—In fact Brahma (God) is attainable by all human beings. But having identified himself with the kaleidoscopic body etc., a person has a disinclination for God. When his affinity for the perishable objects such as the body etc., is renounced, all sins, evils and doubts are destroyed and he attains Brahma (God) Who pervades everywhere.

The Lord explains by the term 'Labhante' (attain) that a Sāṅkhyayogī merges in Brahma (God) in the same way as waves merge in the sea. As waves are not different from the sea because both of them are one and the same, in the same way the soul and the supreme soul are one and the same.

Link:–In the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth verses the Lord explained how a striver following the path of Sāṅkhya (knowledge) can attain God. The Lord in the next verse explains the excellence of such God-Realized souls.

कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम्।
अभितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम्॥ २६॥

kāmakrodhaviyuktānāṁ yatīnāṁ yatacetasām
abhito brahmanirvāṇaṁ vartate viditātmanām

To those austere souls (the wise) who are delivered from desire and anger, who have subdued their minds and who have realized the self, the beatitude of God (Brahmic bliss) exists on all side. 26

Comment:

'Kāmakrodhaviyuktānāṁ yatīnām'— The Lord declares that in the God-Realized souls there remains no trace of the evil propensities such as desire and anger etc. Those evil propensities are born when a man has affinity for the unreal perishable objects (body, senses, mind and intellect etc.). But when he realizes his identity with God, he has no affinity at all for the entire world including his body and mind etc. So there is no question of the birth of evils such as desire and anger in him. If a striver has desire and anger even in their subtle forms, he should not consider himself a liberated soul.

Desire for perishable objects is 'Kāma'. A man has a desire only when he lacks something. There is privation only in the unreal while the real self is not wanting in anything. But when he (the self) identifies himself with the unreal, he feels something lacking in him. This shortage gives birth to desire. If desire is not satisfied, anger is born. Thus there is no desire in the self but when It identifies Itself with the unreal, It seems to have a desire. But how can those who have no identity with the unreal and who have realized the self, experience privation?

The strivers feel that they are not swayed so much by desire and anger now because of their spiritual practice as they were swayed in the past without spiritual practice. It shows that they have lessened through spiritual practice. It means that they can be wiped out also by spiritual practices.

The strivers realize (i) desire and anger are not so frequent as they were in the past (ii) they are not so forceful as they were in the past (iii) their duration is not so long as it was in the past. But sometimes a striver feels otherwise i.e., he feels that they are more forceful now than they were in the past. The reasons are (i) through spiritual practice the attachment to pleasures goes on perishing but perfection is not attained (ii) because of the purity of heart and mind a little desire or anger seems too much to a striver (iii) a striver feels bad if anything goes against his wish but he does not care about it. But this feeling accumulates. At last the accumulated feeling explodes even at the slightest provocation. Other people are also surprised why he lost his temper so easily.

Sometimes a striver judges himself by his inclinations and holds that he has attained perfection. But in fact so long as he realizes that he has attained perfection, it means that still he has some trace of egoistic notion (individuality) and he has not attained perfection.

'Yatacetasām'—The mind is not subdued so long as a man is attached to the unreal. But when the great souls renounce this attachment to the unreal, their minds are subdued.

'Abhito brahmanirvāṇaṁ vartate viditātmanām'—Those great souls who have realized the self which is the aim of human life are called 'Viditātmanām'.

Such great souls here as well as hereafter remain established in Brahma (God) Who is the abode of eternal peace. As a common man while performing different activities remains established in his body constantly, so does a great soul remain established in Brahma constantly while undertaking different activities because he has nothing to do with that non-Self (Asat).

*Link:–The Lord in the next two verses explains that God Who can be realized through the paths of Action and Knowledge can also be realized through the path of meditation.**

स्पर्शान्कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः ।
प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥ २७ ॥
यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।
विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥ २८ ॥

sparśānkṛtvā bahirbāhyāṁścakṣuścaivāntare bhruvoḥ
prāṇāpānau samau kṛtvā nāsābhyantaracāriṇau
yatendriyamanobuddhirmunirmokṣaparāyaṇaḥ
vigatecchābhayakrodho yaḥ sadā mukta eva saḥ

Shutting out all external objects, fixing the vision between the eye-brows, making the inward and the outward breaths moving within the nostrils, the sage, who has controlled the senses, mind and intellect, who is intent on liberation, who has cast away desire, fear and anger, is ever liberated. 27-28

Comment:

'Sparśānkṛtvā bahirbāhyān'— All the objects except God are external. 'Shutting out external object' means that the external objects should not be thought of.

The affinity for the external objects is renounced in the path of Action through service while in the path of knowlege through discrimination. Here the Lord declares that this affinity can be renounced through meditation. In meditation when a striver meditates only on God, he has a disinclination for the external objects. It is not the external objects but his assumed affinity (attachment) for them which is an obstacle to God-Realization.

'Cakṣuścaivāntare bhruvoḥ'—Here the expression 'Bhruvoḥ antare' may stand for fixing the vision between the eye-brows as well as for fixing it at the tip of the nose (Gītā 6.13).

During meditation if the eyes are completely shut, a striver may feel sleepy and if they are completely opened the scene and objects which are before his eyes, may draw his attention and create an obstacle. In order to remove these defects it has been said that with the half-closed eyes the gaze should be fixed between the eye-brows.

'Prāṇāpānau samau kṛtvā nāsābhyantaracāriṇau'— The breath exhaled is 'Prāṇa' while the breath inhaled is 'Apāna'. The speed of 'Prāṇa breath' is fast while the speed of 'Apāna breath' is slow. In order to regulate the process of exhalation and inhalation so that both of them may take equal time, first the Apāna breath is inhaled through the left nostril and then the Prāṇa breath is exhaled through the right nostril. Then the Apāna breath is inhaled through the right nostril and the Prāṇa breath is exhaled through the left nostril. This process of exhalation and inhalation should take equal time. Through such constant practice the flow of the Prāṇa breath and the Apāna breath becomes even, gentle and subtle (thin). When there is no sensation of air inside or outside the nostril and in the throat etc., it should be understood that the flow of the Prāṇa breath and Apāna breath has become even. When this flow becomes even (because of the

* The path of meditation is an independent means for a striver to realize God and it can also be used by the strivers following the paths of Action, Knowledge and Devotion. Chanting the Lord's names, meditation, good company and study of the scriptures are useful and necessary for every striver.

aim of God-Realization) the mind starts meditating on God. This control of the breathing process has been described here because it plays an important role in the path of meditation.

'Yatendriyamanobuddhiḥ'— There are two sources of knowledge—senses and intellect. In between the two the mind has its place. A man is to be cautious whether his mind is under the influence of senses or intellect or both senses and intellect. Senses tempt the mind towards sense-objects while intellect guides it to think of the consequences. Those people, whose minds are swayed by senses, indulge in worldly sensual pleasures while those, whose minds are guided by intellect, do not rejoice in pleasures born of contacts (Gītā 5/22).

Generally the strivers' minds are controlled both by senses and intellect. A sort of struggle goes on in their minds. They neither attach full importance to their discrimination nor do they enjoy worldly pleasures. This dualism (struggle) is an obstacle to meditation. Therefore, here the Lord means to say that the mind should be controlled by intellect (discrimination) rather than by senses.

'Munirmokṣaparāyaṇaḥ'— The striver whose aim is God-Realization has been called here 'Mokṣa parāyaṇaḥ'. As the Lord pervades everywhere all the time, He is attained to all. But He is not quickly attained to people because they have not a firm resolve. As soon as they have a firm resolve, He will be realized. In fact the aim (resolve) is pre-determined because this human body has been bestowed upon human beings so that they may attain God. But they forget this aim. So they have to realize this aim. When they realize this aim, they have a desire for God-Realization. This desire wipes out all the worldly desires and leads strivers to God-Realization. The Lord has used this expression 'Mokṣa parāyaṇaḥ' so that a striver may realize that his aim is God-Realization.

In all the spiritual disciplines—of Action, of Meditation, of Devotion and of Knowledge etc., firm resolve (aim) plays a very important role. How can a striver attain perfection or God-Realization if he has not a firm resolve (aim) to attain Him? So here emphasis has been laid on the firm resolve by the expression 'Mokṣa parāyaṇaḥ' in the path of meditation.

'Vigatecchābhayakrodho yaḥ'— We are angry with the man who is a stumbling block to the satisfaction of our desires, if he is weaker than we. But we are full of fear if he is stronger than we. Similarly, we are afraid of death if we have a desire to live and are angry with those, who don't let us fulfil our desires. Therefore, desire is the root of fear and anger. If a man has the only aim of God-Realization he can be free from fear, anger and desires. As soon as he is free from desires, he attains liberation (salvation) because it is the desire to acquire objects and to live alive which leads him to the bondage of birth and death. A striver should think seriously whether he can acquire objects and live alive by escaping death merely by having desires. If it is not so, he should have a firm resolve that he has to realize God only. By doing so he can be immediately liberated. But if he has a desire to acquire objects and to live alive, the desire will never be fulfilled and he can't be free from the fear of death and also from anger. Therefore, it is necessary to be desireless in order to be liberated.

The things are not acquired by mere desires. To get a thing or not to get a thing does not depend upon mere desire. But it is God's dispensation. Then what is the difficulty in discarding desires when they can't procure us objects ? No one can escape death and acquire things by desiring. But if the desires are renounced, the life can be blissful. If a person has no desire to live alive, even death will provide him joy. The life becomes sad when he has desires and they are not satisfied; and death appears horrifying when he has a desire to live. Therefore, he who has renounced the desire to acquire things as well as to live alive, is liberated even during this life

and he becomes immortal.

'Sadā mukta eva saḥ'— The assumption that a person has affinity for the perishable objects is bondage while renunciation of this assumed affinity is liberation. He who is liberated is not at all influenced by any incident, circumstance, praise, blame, favour, disfavour, life and death etc.

The expression 'Sadā mukta eva' shows that in fact a striver (the self) is ever liberated but he can't realize the reality because of his assumed affinity (attachment) for the perishable world. As soon as this assumed affinity is renounced, he realizes his self-evident liberation or salvation.

Link:–Having described the paths of Action and of Knowledge the Lord described the path of meditation which is useful for both the paths. Now in the next verse He describes the path of devotion which easily leads to salvation (peace).

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।
सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥ २९ ॥

bhoktāraṁ yajñatapasāṁ sarvalokamaheśvaram
suhṛdaṁ sarvabhūtānāṁ jñātvā māṁ śāntimṛcchati

He having known Me, as the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the Great Lord of all the worlds and the disinterested friend of all beings, attains peace. 29

Comment:

'Bhoktāraṁ yajñatapasām'— When a person performs any good action, he regards the body, senses, mind, intellect and objects etc., with which he performs actions, as his own; and he regards the person for whom the good action is performed as the enjoyer. If he worships a god, he considers the god the enjoyer and if renders service to a hungry man by offering him food, he considers that hungry man the enjoyer of food. In order to dispel this misunderstanding the Lord declares that only God is the enjoyer of all good actions because He is seated in the hearts of all*. Therefore, the Lord should be considered the enjoyer of all virtuous actions such as adoration and offering food and water etc., to any one. A striver should aim at the Lord rather than at beings.

In the twenty-fourth verse of the ninth chapter also the Lord declares, "I alone am the enjoyer of all sacrifices."

Secondly, the body, senses, mind, intellect and objects etc., with which virtuous actions are performed, are not a person's own, they belong to God. By an error, he regards them as his own; and by regarding them as his own and by performing actions for himself with them, he becomes the enjoyer of those actions. Therefore, the Lord exhorts him to perform all actions only for Him. By doing so those actions will not bear fruit for him and his affinity for actions will be renounced.

It is desire which conduces a man to perform evil actions. When he, having renounced desire, performs all actions only for God, he can't perform evil actions; and his affinity for virtuous actions is also renounced by performing actions only for Him. Thus having renounced affinity for all actions totally, he attains the Supreme Peace.

'Sarvalokamaheśvaram'— There may be different lords in different worlds

* "He is seated in the hearts of all" (Gītā 13/17); "I am seated in the hearts of all" (Gītā 15/15); "The Lord abides in the hearts of all beings" (Gītā 18/61).

but all of them are governed by God. So He is the Supreme Lord of the lords of all the worlds. It means that only God is the Lord of the entire creation. So how can an honest man regard anything of the world as his own?

Generally, people regard the bodies, senses, minds, intellects, life-breaths, families, riches and property etc., as their own but they say that God is the Lord of the entire universe. Now the question arises whether it is wise to say so. No. When people regard themselves as the owner of every person and object etc., what remains there whose lord He is? Therefore, only he who regards nothing as his, can call God as the Lord of the entire universe.

A man is free to make the right use of objects such as body etc., but he is not free to regard them as his own. If he, instead of regarding them as his own, offers them to God by regarding them as His, he attains the Supreme Peace.

'Suhṛdaṁ sarvabhūtānāṁ jñātvā māṁ śāntimṛcchati'— Those who know* that God, Who is the Lord of the lords of all the worlds, is the disinterested friend of all beings; and no one else does them so much good as He, and no one preserves them and loves them so much as He, attain Supreme Peace. Why should we be full of fear, worry, disturbance and disquietude etc., when the omnipotent Lord is the disinterested friend of all of us?

Only God and his devotees are interested in the welfare of living creatures in a selfless manner. There is nothing unattained that should be attained (Gītā 3/22) by Him; therefore, He is naturally the disinterested friend of all. A devotee also thinks of the welfare of all beings and does good to them (Śrīmadbhāgavata 3/25/21). The disinterested nature of devotees has descended upon them only from God.

God is the Enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities. He is the great Lord of all the worlds and He is the most disinterested friend of all beings. Out of these three facts if strivers accept just one, they attain the Supreme Peace in the form of God-Realization. If they accept all the three, God is realized instantaneously.

'Desire','sense of mine for the worldly objects' and 'disinclination for God' are the three stumbling blocks to God-Realization. The Lord by the expression 'Bhoktāraṁ yajña tapasām' means to say that a striver should have no desire and should do nothing for himself. By the expression 'Sarva loka maheśvaram' He means to say that he should regard nothing as his i.e., he should renounce the desire for pleasure and should not lay claim to objects and persons. By the expression 'Suhṛdaṁ sarva bhūtānām' He means to say that he should regard only God as his. If he accepts one of them, the remaining two are automatically translated into practice by him and he realizes God.

A man can renounce the desire for pleasure only if he does not regard any being or object as his. If he has the sense of possession over them, he will expect some reward or the other from them. When a striver renounces the desire for pleasure, his sense of mine is renounced; and if he renounces the sense of mine, his desire for pleasure is renounced. When he renounces his senses of mine for all objects and persons, only God remains his and he realizes his real affinity for Him. As soon as the desire for pleasures is renounced or the sense of mine is renounced or the striver realizes his real affinity for God, he attains the Supreme Peace because if he translates any one of them into practice, the remaining two are also automatically translated into practice.

A man should perform actions and also know the art of their performance. He can't perform actions properly and scrupulously without either of the two. Therefore, in the third chapter the Lord has laid special emphasis on the performance of actions but has also said that a striver should know

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* Here 'knowing' stands for assumption. Firm assumption is in no way less than knowledge.

what action is; in the fourth chapter He has laid special emphasis on the knowledge of the true nature of action and also mentioned the performance of action. In the fifth chapter the Lord has described both the paths of Knowledge (Sāṅkhyayoga) and of Action (Karma-yoga) as the means of God-Realization, yet He has declared that the path of Action is superior to that of Knowledge. In this chapter, the Lord having systematically described the paths of Action and Knowledge, has dealt with the path of meditation in brief and at last described the path of Devotion, which He, in particular, aims at.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे कर्मसंन्यासयोगो
नाम पञ्चमोऽध्यायः ॥५॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde karmasaṁnyāsayogo nāma pañcamo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ, Tat, Sat, the names of the Lord, in the Upaniṣhad of the Bhagavad Gītā, the knowledge of Brahma, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, this is the fifth discourse designated:

"The Yoga of Action and Knowledge".

This fifth chapter is designated as 'Karma saṁnyāsayoga' (The Yoga of Action and Knowledge) because in it there is the description of both the paths of action and of knowledge.

Words, letters and Uvāca (said) in the Fifth Chapter

(1) In this chapter in **'Atha pañcamo'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are three words, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are four words, in verses there are three hundred and fifty-two words and there are thirteen concluding words. Thus the total number of the words is three hundred and seventy-two.

(2) In the chapter in **'Atha pañcamo'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are seven letters, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are thirteen letters, in verses there are nine hundred and twenty-eight letters and there are forty-eight concluding letters. Thus the total number of letters is nine hundred and ninety-six. Each of the verses of this chapter consists of thirty-two letters.

(3) In this chapter **Uvāca** (said) has been used twice **'Arjuna Uvāca'** once and **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** once.

Metres Used in the Fifth Chapter

Out of the twenty-nine verses of this chapter in the first quarter of the thirteenth and twenty-ninth verses 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'na-vipulā'** metre; in the third quarter of the twenty-second verse 'ma-gaṇa' being used there is **'ma-vipulā'** metre. The remaining twenty-six verses are possessed of the characteristics of right **'pathyāvaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

Śrī Hariḥ

SIXTH CHAPTER

Introduction

In the beginning of the fifth chapter Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa which of the two, the Discipline of Knowledge or the Discipline of Disinterested Action, is better. Lord Kṛṣṇa replied, "Both of them lead to supreme bliss but Yoga of action is superior to Yoga of knowledge (5/2)."

Lord Kṛṣṇa described upto the twenty-sixth verse of the fifth chapter how they lead to supreme bliss. Then He described the Discipline of Meditation in two verses which is helpful in the Discipline of Knowledge as well as Action and also leads to supreme bliss independently. Then He concluded the fifth chapter by announcing, "Having known Me the Supreme Lord of all the worlds, My devotee attains peace."

Now Lord Kṛṣṇa in the sixth chapter again explains the superiority of the Discipline of Disinterested Action.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।
स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्न चाक्रियः ॥ १ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca
anāśritaḥ karmaphalaṁ kāryaṁ karma karoti yaḥ
sa saṁnyāsī ca yogī ca na niragnirna cākriyaḥ

The Blessed Lord said:

He who discharges his duty without expecting its fruit, is a Saṁnyāsī (Sāṅkhyayogī) and a Yogī (Karmayogī). He is not a Saṁnyāsī (Renouncer) who has merely renounced sacred fire and he is not a Karmayogī who has merely given up all activities. 1

Comment:

'Anāśritaḥ karmaphalam'—Lord Kṛṣṇa probably means to say that a man should not depend on men, things, incidents, circumstances and actions etc., because they are all perishable and kaleidoscopic while he himself being a fragment of God is imperishable and constant. So how can the perishable satisfy the imperishable? He remains blank. Moreover he gets attached to them and that attachment is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21). If he renounces this attachment, he may realize emancipation which is axiomatic. In fact he is naturally emancipated. But it is because of attachment that he can't realize this emancipation. Therefore the Lord declares that a person should discharge his duty for duty's sake without having any attachment to the fruit of action. Abandoning the fruit of action, the Yogī attains peace in the form of God-Realization; whereas he who works with a selfish motive, being attached to the fruit of action is bound (Gītā 5/12).

A man without depending on either of the three bodies—physical, subtle and causal, which are the fruits of actions should use them in the welfare of all beings. He should render selfless service to others with the physical body, think of the welfare and salvation of others with the subtle-body and offer stability (trance) acquired through the causal body for the welfare of the world, because these bodies belong to the world, not to us and so they are for the service of the world, not for us. They have their indentity with the world while they are distinct from the self. Not to depend on these bodies means 'not to expect the fruit

of action, and to work for the welfare of the world means 'to discharge one's duty'. One who discharges one's duty for duty's sake without expecting its fruit viz., serves the world with the worldly things being a Karmayogī is extolled as a Saṁnyāsī in this verse and one who renounces mineness with the worldly things is a Tyāgī i.e., Yogī.

The result of discharging the duty without expecting its fruit will be that he will not develop new attachment because he does not perform actions for himself; and old attachment will perish by doing good to others. By performing actions, his impulse for actions will also disappear. Thus renunciation of attachment will spontaneously lead to salvation. The desire to get hold of the perishable is bondage and to renounce this desire is emancipation. The method to attain this emancipation is that he should not depend on the perishable viz., should not have any affinity for them.

'Kāryaṁ karma karoti yaḥ'—'Kāryam' and 'Karma' are synonyms which mean duty. Which can be easily performed, which is a must and which can never be forsaken is called a duty. Discharge of duty is not impossible, not even hard. What ought not to be done is not duty, it is 'Akartavya' (that should not be done). Activities which ought not to be done are of two types (1) Which are beyond our capacity (2) Which are forbidden by the scriptures and traditions. Such activities are never to be done. The gist is that we should resort to prescribed duties without expecting any return, with a detached spirit, for the welfare of others. One should discharge one's duty in accordance with the ordinance of the scriptures for the welfare of others without expecting its fruit in order to do away with attachment for action as well as its fruit.

Actions are performed with two attitudes of mind—for obtaining worldly things and for wiping out attachment to actions and their fruits. Here is the inspiration to perform actions with the latter attitude.

'Sa saṁnyāsī ca yogī ca'—He who discharges his duty in the above mentioned way is a Saṁnyāsī and a Yogī. He is a Saṁnyāsī because he discharges his duty without attachment for the action and its fruit and a Yogī because he remains equanimous in pleasure and pain while discharging his duty.

His sense of doership and enjoyership is destroyed by doing actions without expecting any return. Thus all his connections with actions and their fruits are totally cut asunder. Therefore that Karmayogī has been called a 'Saṁnyāsī.'

It appears that by the term 'Saṁnyāsī' that Arjuna thought it better to renounce the physical performance of actions. So in 2/5 Arjuna said that it was better to live on alms than to wage the war. So Lord Kṛṣṇa here says to Arjuna,"O Arjuna, the conception you have about a Saṁnyāsī is not true. He who discharges his duty for duty's sake, in no way attached to the fruit of action, is a real Saṁnyāsī."

'Na niragniḥ'—By leaving mere household fire viz., 'Havana' and objects etc., a person is not a Saṁnyāsī in the real sense. Till he has importance and attraction for material objects, he can't be a real Saṁnyāsī.

'Na akriyaḥ'—Generally people think that a Yogī is he who abandons all the things and actions and leads a secluded life having the state of trance. But Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to say that a Yogī is he who discharges his duty by ceasing to depend on the perishable viz., without expecting the fruit of action. The secluded life with senses under control may inspire man to attain accomplishments (Siddhi) but it cannot lead him to God-Realization. By mere discarding actions physically he can't be called a Karmayogī. A Yogī in the real sense is he who performs his duty having no dependence at all on the perishable objects.

A man has an instinct for action. So sometimes it is observed that good strivers who devote themselves to adoration and meditation in solitude, are engaged busily in performing actions for the welfare of others by giving up their secluded life. The momentum of the impulse for action is

pacified only when actions are performed selflessly only for the welfare of others. In that case equanimity is attained and that equanimity leads to God-Realization.

An Exceptional Fact

The feelings of egoism (I'ness) and attachment or Mineness are man-made. First a man accepts that he is a householder. But when he becomes a sage, he says that he is a sage. Thus his egoism changes. Similarly he has attachment for a thing which he possesses. But when he gives it to any one else permanently, he has no attachment for it. It proves that the feelings of egoism and attachment are not real but only assumed. Had they been real they might not have ceased to be because 'The real never ceases to be' and if it ceases to be it means that it is not real, it is unreal, because 'The unreal has no existence' (Gītā 2/16).

The Self (soul) which is the base of egoism and attachment is a fragment of God and is ever existent and has identity with God Who pervades everywhere. In the self there is neither egoism nor attachment but the man by identifying himself with the body and the worldly things accepts them in him. Actually he is free and capable in identifying himself with them. But it is upto him whether he accepts this identification or does not accept it. It is not so that he is not free or capable to break off this identification. It is he himself who has accepted this affinity with the body and the world. It is not otherwise. Therefore he who can assume this connection, can also snap it. Every human being is free to accept that he is a householder or a sage. Similarly he can accept the things as his own or not his own. He accepts that he is a baby, a boy, a youth and an old man in different stages of life. Similarly he accepts the toys as his own in babyhood or boyhood, while in youth and old age he accepts money and property etc., as his own. Thus he can accept the affinity or renounce it. This affinity can be renounced easily because it is based on mere assumption.

The man himself is eternal while the body and the world are transient. Therefore affinity between the eternal and the transient can't be everlasting. When he himself accepts this affinity, it seems to him that egoism and attachment are part and parcel of his self and it is difficult to renounce them. But it is wrong. This affinity is not real, it is only assumed because he himself is the illuminator and the onlooker while the body is the object to be illumined and looked on; the Self is beyond space while the body is confined to space. He is sentient while the body is insentient; he is the knower while the body is to be known. The Self is the knower till his relation with the body is there. In absence of this relation the Self is Knowledge-incarnate. In that knowledge there is neither 'I' nor 'mine'. There is total negation of egoism and mineness. Thus they are poles apart. The self actually is none else but the Absolute Who neither has, nor had, nor will have egoism and attachment or mineness in the least.

Link:–In the preceding verse it is mentioned that he who is a Saṁnyāsī is a Yogī. So in the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the relationship between Karma Saṁnyāsa (Discipline of Knowledge) and Karmayoga (Discipline of Action).

यं संन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।
न ह्यसंन्यस्तसंकल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥ २ ॥

yaṁ saṁnyāsamiti prāhuryogaṁ taṁ viddhi pāṇḍava
na hyasaṁnyastasaṅkalpo yogī bhavati kaścana

O Pāṇḍava, what they speak of as Saṁnyāsa, know that to be the same as Yoga; for none becomes a Yogī without renouncing thought of the world. 2

Comment:

'Yaṁ saṁnyāsamiti prāhuryogaṁ taṁ viddhi pāṇḍava'—In the beginning of the fifth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa explained that the Yoga of Knowledge and the Yoga of Action both lead to Supreme Bliss (5/2), and the supreme state is attained equally by both the means (5/5) viz., both of them are the same. Similarly here also He points out that as a Saṁnyāsī is a renouncer, a Karmayogī is also a renouncer.

In the ninth verse of the eighteenth chapter also Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "An action which is performed as a duty, giving up attachment and fruit is regarded as 'Sāttvika' form of renunciation." By this sort of renunciation a man becomes a renouncer or a Yogī because he totally gets detached from objects and actions. Similarly a Saṁnyāsī renounces doership and is thus a renouncer. It means that there is no difference between a Yogī and a Saṁnyāsī viz., both are the same. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa in the third verse of the fifth chapter said, "The Karmayogī should ever be considered a Saṁnyāsī (renouncer) for he has transcended the pairs of opposites such as attachment and aversion."

'Na hyasaṁnyastasaṅkalpo yogī bhavati kaścana'—Different thoughts come into the mind. The thought for which there is attachment or aversion of the mind becomes a 'Saṅkalpa' (Pursuit of the mind). Without renouncing that pursuit no one can become a Yogī (Sāṅkhyayogī or Karmayogī) but he is a voluptuary, because union (affinity) for God is 'Yoga' and one who has a desire for pleasures is a voluptuary, not a 'Yogī' because instead of attachment for God he is attached to pleasures. But when he renounces the desire for the unreal he becomes a renouncer and realizes his eternal union with God. As men are voluptuary, so are birds and animals because they have also not renounced the pursuits of the mind.

It means that so long as there is the least affinity for the unreal, a man can't become a 'Yogī' in spite of a lot of practice, trance and a secluded life, according to the gospel of the Gītā.

Though the Discipline of Saṁnyāsa and that of Yoga are different yet as far as renunciation of the pursuits of the mind is concerned, both are one and the same.

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains how to attain that 'Yoga' which has been praised in the previous verse.

आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।
योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥ ३ ॥

ārurukṣormuneryogaṁ karma kāraṇamucyate
yogārūḍhasya tasyaiva śamaḥ kāraṇamucyate

To the contemplative soul, who desires to rise to the height of Karmayoga (in the form of equanimity), action without motive is spoken of as the means; for the same man when he is established in Yoga, serenity (tranquillity of mind) is spoken of as the means (to God-Realization). 3

Comment:

'Ārurukṣormuneryogaṁ karma kāraṇamucyate'—He who desires to rise to the heights of Yoga (Equanimity), action without motive is spoken of as the means. Every born human being who is born, nourished and is living his life is dependent on others. All his possessions, body, senses, mind, intellect and ego are evolutes of Nature. Therefore till he through them does not render service to others, he will not rise to the heights of Karmayoga or in

other words he will not attain equanimity. It means that a man should discharge his duty by rendering service to others with all his means because whatever means including his body, senses, mind, intellect and ego he possesses, belong to the society; and all the things have identity with the world, not with the self. By rendering service to others, the flow of the actions will be directed towards the world and man himself will attain equanimity. The same fact has been explained by Lord Kṛṣṇa (in Gītā 4/23), "He, who performs actions for the welfare of others, his actions melt away viz., don't lead him to bondage." And in Gītā 3/9 He declares, "Man is bound by actions, other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice viz., he is bound when he performs them with a selfish motive."

How is action without motive the means to rise to the heights of Karmayoga (equanimity) ? The reason is that our equanimity will be judged only when we perform actions. While performing actions if we aim to remain equanimous in pleasure and pain, it means that our action is the means to rise to the height of Yoga, otherwise not.

'Yogārūḍhasya tasyaiva śamaḥ kāraṇamucyate'—Affinity for the unreal causes disquietude, because the Self is eternal and permanent while all the worldly objects such as bodies etc., are transient and kaleidoscopic, but the Self accepts his affinity with them and when he foresees their destruction or they actually perish, he is disquiet. But if he utilizes them in rendering service to others, his affinity breaks off, he rises to the heights of Yoga and attains tranquillity. If he enjoys that tranquillity, it will delay his progress. But if he does not get attached to it and does not enjoy it, that tranquillity becomes the means of God-Realization.

Link:–What are the marks of a Yogī who has risen to the heights of Karmayoga? The explanation comes in the next verse.

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते ।
सर्वसंकल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥ ४ ॥

yadā hi nendriyārtheṣu na karmasvanuṣajjate
sarvasaṅkalpasaṁnyāsī yogārūḍhastadocyate

When a man ceases to have any attachment either for the objects of senses or for actions and has renounced all thoughts of the world, he is said to have attained Yoga. 4

Comment:

'Yadā hi nendriyārtheṣu na karmasvanuṣajjate'—Firstly a striver should not be attached to the objects of five senses — sound, touch, colour, taste, smell; to favourable circumstances, incidents, men, comfort, respect and praise etc. He should not enjoy them and should not be pleased with them. He should remain detached by thinking that all of them are transient and perishable.

The means to get detached from the objects of senses is not to derive pleasure out of fulfilment of desires. He should not be pleased with desirable objects, circumstances, incidents and persons etc. If he derives pleasure out of sense-objects, it enhances attachment. Therefore a striver should neither desire favourable circumstances nor derive pleasure out of them. In this way his senses will not get attached to sense-objects.

Secondly a man feels shortage of favourable objects etc., without acquiring them and having acquired them he becomes a slave to them. Actually he is a slave in both the cases. First he was a slave because he wanted to acquire them and then he was slave lest they should slip away. But in the second case he does not realize

servility. He rather feels that he is free having acquired them. This is mere deception. Similarly deriving pleasure out of the favourable circumstances is deception as this pleasure spoils his nature and gives birth to desire to enjoy pleasures again and again. This desire for pleasure misleads him to the shackles of birth and death. To desire and to expect favourable circumstances and to feel happy on their acquisition is the root of all miseries and sins. If they are discarded, a man attains equanimity.

Thirdly, whatever extra money and objects besides our necessities we possess are not ours, they are of the poor and the needy. So we should hand them over to the poor and the needy people and should think that by doing so we are free from debt. Thus we shall not get attached to objects and riches etc.

'Na karmasvanuṣajjate*'—As a striver should not be attached to the objects of sense, he should not be attached to actions and their fruits. If an action is performed well, it gives pleasure, but if it is not performed well it gives pain. This pleasure or pain is attachment to action. So a striver should perform actions carefully without being attached to them because they are transient while he himself is eternal. So how can they have any effect on him? He is effected only when he is attached to them and that attachment misleads him to the shackles of birth and death. So he should not be attached either to the objects of senses or to actions. By doing so he becomes completely detached from Nature as Nature consists of only actions and objects. Thus he attains Yoga.

Here a point needs attention that there is attachment for actions for their fruits and the fruits are the pleasures of the objects of senses. So if this attachment to pleasures perishes, attachment to actions will also perish. Then why has Lord Kṛṣṇa mentioned cessation of attachment for actions? The reason is that there is an independent attachment for actions also. Even without the desire for fruit there is a momentum of impulse for actions; so a man wants to perform an action. A man ceases to have that attachment by performing actions either for others or for God. So Lord Kṛṣṇa in the twelfth chapter first exhorted Arjuna to seek to attain Him through the Yoga (Discipline) of practice. But if he was unable even to take to practice, Lord Kṛṣṇa asked him to be intent on performing actions for Him (12/10). It means that the striver who can't concentrate his mind on God and there is an inner urge for actions, he should perform actions only for God. Thus the attachment of the striver who follows the Discipline of Devotion will be blotted out. Similar will be the result in case of a striver who follows the Discipline of Action, if he performs actions for the welfare of others.

As there is attachment for actions, there is also attachment for inaction. A striver should have no attachment for inaction also because inaction causes idleness and laziness which are 'Tāmasika' traits; while attachment to action misleads to futile pursuits which are 'Rājasika' traits.

How long will a striver take to rise to the heights of Yoga? To answer this question Lord Kṛṣṇa has used the terms 'Yadā' and 'Tadā' viz., 'when' and 'then'. It means that as soon as he ceases to have any attachment for the objects of senses and for actions, he attains Yoga.

Man himself being a fragment of God is eternal and free but he gets attached to the perishable worldly bodies and objects, the evolutes of Nature and this attachment misleads him to bondage. If he has the firm determination not to enjoy the worldly objects and actions today, he will at once attain Yoga because Yoga (equanimity) is axiomatic. We don't realize it (the real) because we are attached to the unreal.

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* Here the term 'Karmasu' has been used in the plural number which shows that the man who is attached to actions has a desire to perform several actions and reap their fruits. But in the forty-fifth verse of the eighteenth chapter the term 'Karmaṇi' has been used in the singular number in order to show that a man free from attachment performs several actions with one intellect that he has to perform his duty.

'Sarvasaṅkalpasaṁnyāsī'— Out of all 'Sphuraṇās' the 'Sphuraṇā', which is pleasing and to which we are attached becomes a 'Saṅkalpa'.

This 'Saṅkalpa' proves to be pleasant or unpleasant because of favourable or unfavourable circumstances. A man has attachment to the favourable circumstances while he has aversion to the unfavourable ones. Thus this 'Saṅkalpa' leads to nothing but bondage and loss. It is conducive neither to Self-Realization nor to selfless service nor to devotion to God nor to good relations with the family. Thus a striver should renounce this 'Saṅkalpa' by thinking that it involves neither one's own welfare nor of the world, it is conducive neither to the service of the family nor to God-Realization (Self-Realization). So a striver should be free from all 'Saṅkalpas' (thoughts of the world).

If a striver does not get attached to the thought it is a 'Sphuraṇā'. If a 'Sphuraṇā' does not assume the shape of a 'Saṅkalpa' it vanishes naturally. This 'Sphuraṇā' should also be renounced because it wastes time though it does not cause loss and downfall. But a striver must renounce 'Saṅkalpas' because without renouncing them, he does not attain Yoga; and without attaining Yoga he does not realize God, something remains to be done by him, his human life is not successful, he doesn't develop devotion to God and he does not become totally free from sufferings.

In the second verse of this chapter the Lord declares by the negative inference that none becomes a Yogī without renouncing thoughts of the world while in this verse He declares by the positive inference that a man attains Yoga by renouncing thoughts of the world. It means that a striver should have no thought of the world.

The Methods to Renounce All Thoughts of the World

(i) God has bestowed this human birth, the last of all births upon us by His grace for salvation. So we have not to waste this valuable time of human life in futile thoughts of the world. By thinking so the pursuit of the mind can be renounced.

(ii) The striver following the Discipline of Action has to discharge his duty without attachment (Gītā 3/19) at present, while the thoughts that come to the mind are either of the past or the future. So a striver should not be entangled in them.

(iii) A striver following the Discipline of Devotion should think that God is existent now, He is his and in him, while the thoughts that come to the mind are either of the past or the future. So it is a blunder to think of the pursuits which don't exist now, but not to think of God Who has His existence now. By thinking so a striver should renounce all thoughts of the world.

'Yogārūḍhastadocyate'— Equanimity in success and failure is called Yoga (Gītā 2/48). Attainment of equanimity is attainment of Yoga. Equanimity leads to God-Realization. In the second verse of this chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa declared that none becomes a Yogī without renouncing the thoughts of the world and here He has declared that by renouncing all thoughts of the world, a man is said to have attained Yoga. It proves that all the Disciplines as that of Knowledge or that of Action lead to attainment of Yoga (Gītā 5/5).

Link:—In the previous verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explained the marks of a Yogī and by giving the terms 'Yadā' (When) and 'Tadā' (Then) explained that man is free in attaining Yoga viz., in attaining Self-Realization. So Lord Kṛṣṇa inspires every human being to lift himself by his own self.

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ ५ ॥

uddharedātmanātmānaṁ nātmānamavasādayet
ātmaiva hyātmano bandhurātmaiva ripurātmanaḥ

Let a man lift himself by his self; let him not degrade himself; for he himself is his friend and he himself is his enemy. 5

Comment:

'Uddharedātmanātmānam'— A man should lift himself by his own self. It means that he should lift himself above the body, senses, mind, intellect and life-breath because all of them belong to Matter (Nature) and they have identity with Matter while he himself is a fragment of God and has identity with Him. It also means that he should lift himself from the limited 'I' to the unlimited 'Self.' So, for God-Realization there is no need to depend on the insentient, the unreal, because attachment for the unreal or dependence on the unreal is the main obstacle to God-Realization. There is no need of the body, senses, mind and intellect to attain God Who is his, is in him, exists now and here, because the real can't be attained by the unreal, the real can be attained by renouncing the unreal.

Secondly as it was explained in the previous verse a man should cease to have any attachment for objects, actions and thoughts and raise himself above them. It is everyone's experience that objects, actions and thoughts have a beginning and an end; they are born and they decay; they are united and disunited but he himself remains the same without the least modification. Therefore; detachment from them means lifting himself by his own self.

Man possesses discrimination, by utilizing which a striver can lift himself and can realize God. A striver by following the Discipline of Knowledge can discriminate between the real and the unreal and thus gets established in his own self. A striver following the Discipline of Devotion accepts that he is God's and God is his and this feeling leads him to God-Realization. A striver following the Discipline of Action by using discrimination utilizes the so-called his body, senses, mind and intellect in rendering service to others and thus by breaking off his affinity with them, gets established in his own self. Thus his discrimination leads him to God-Realization, whatsoever discipline he may follow.

An Exceptional Fact About God-Realization

Think of—'I am not body', because the body changes while I remain the same; 'This body is not mine' because I can't keep this body healthy and in my possession as long as I wish; 'This body is not for me' because if it had been for me, I might have not had any other desire. Secondly, this body is kaleidoscopic while I am eternal. How can this kaleidoscopic body be of any use to the eternal 'Self'? Thirdly, if it had been for me, it would have lived with me for ever, but it does not live. Therefore, if a man thinks seriously and sticks to the thought, 'I am not body' 'The body is not mine' and 'The body is not for me', he will realize God spontaneously.

Now a question rises why Lord Kṛṣṇa has said that a man should lift himself by his own self, when God, preceptors, saints and the scriptures also lead a man to God-Realization. The answer is that all of them will lead us to God-Realization only if we have faith in them; and it depends upon us whether we have faith or we don't have faith in them. It is because of the lack of faith and desire that several incarnations of the Lord and many saints and liberated souls could not enable us to realize God. But those who had faith in them realized Him. Therefore, a striver by having faith in them and by obeying them should realize God. It is a unique opportunity for us that this human body has been bestowed upon us in this Kali-Age so that we may realize God not only once but several times during this life. But we can realize Him only when we ourselves want to do so.

Secondly man himself has degraded himself as he has accepted his affinity for the world, the world has not accepted

that affinity which is breaking off every moment. If he does not accept the new affinity, he may realize God.

'Nātmānamavasādayet'—He should not degrade himself. It means that he himself being uniform and sentient should not enslave himself by having dependence on the transient and insentient worldly objects such as riches, ranks etc. By virtue of his riches and ranks he assumes himself elevated. This elevation is of his virtues rather than his own. This dependence is his degradation. But how shocking and surprising it is that he regards this degradation as promotion and dependence as independence !

'Ātmaiva hyātmano bandhuḥ'—A man himself is his friend when he accepts that there is no need for mundane things such as body, senses, mind, intellect etc., in God-Realization. Secondly he should have faith in his guide, in God, saints and the scriptures. They will lead him to God-Realization. By having this faith he himself is his friend.

'Ātmaiva ripurātmanaḥ'—He himself is his enemy when he accepts his affinity with the worldly body, senses and mind etc.

In the second line of the verse the term 'Eva' (only) has been used twice to emphasize the fact that he and only he himself is his friend and foe; any one else neither is nor can be his friend and foe. By accepting his affinity with the world he is his enemy and by accepting no affinity in the least with the world, he is his friend.

Link:–In the preceding verse Lord Kṛṣṇa declared that a man himself is his friend and he himself is his enemy. How is he himself his friend and enemy? The Lord provides an answer in the verse that follows.

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ।
अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥ ६ ॥

bandhurātmātmanastasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ
anātmanastu śatrutve vartetātmaiva śatruvat

To him who has conquered his (base or lower) self by the (divine or higher) self, his own self is the friend; but to him who has not subdued the lower self, his own self acts as the foe. 6

Comment:

'Bandhurātmātmanastasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ' —Nothing resides in a man except the pure self. He does not at all depend on the lower self viz., body, senses, mind and intellect etc. He renounces his dependence on them altogether and gets established in his own self. He is the one who has conquered himself.

How to know that a man is established in his own self? When his mind is established in equanimity, it means that he is established in his own self because the Absolute is free from blemish and is equanimous (Gītā 5/19). It means that by being established in the Absolute he has conquered himself by his own self. Actually he was already established in the Absolute but he could not realize it because he had assumed the body, mind and intellect etc., as his.

In this world a man cannot defeat anyone without the help of others and this help of others means his own defeat. How?. For example if you want to defeat others either with arms or with arguments, you will have to depend on arms or arguments, then and then only you can defeat others. It means that you are first defeated by arms or arguments. Thus one can't conquer others without his own defeat. But one who has no need of others in the least, conquers himself by his own self and he himself is his friend.

'Anātmanastu śatrutve

vartetātmaiva śatruvat'—He, who thinks that the body, senses, mind, intellect, riches and prosperity etc., are necessary for him and who depends on them, is his own foe. He thinks that by accepting them as his own he has controlled them and conquered them. But the fact is that he has been defeated by them. When he takes his defeat as victory it means that his own self is his foe.

The term 'Śatrutve' means that a man by depending on the worldly things and by accepting his affinity with them, works as a foe for himself, because he himself is sentient but he attaches importance to the insentient and depends on them. The more claim he lays on material objects, the more he becomes a slave to them. Further he harbours desire for respect, honour and fame that leads to his fall. He concedes that he is elevating himself but actually there is its reverse. This proves that he himself is his own enemy in disguise.

How surprising it is that a man by attaching importance to matter, by forgetting God-Realization as the real aim of human life, wants to maintain the memory of his so-called body and name by his photo and statue during the life time as well as after death ! Thus he in spite of being sentient (self) gets entangled in the slavery of matter (non self) and acts as his foe.

By using the term 'Ṣatruvat' Lord Kṛṣṇa means to explain that a man by accepting his affinity with the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., thinks that he has become their master but actually he has become their slave. Though he does not think to harm himself yet the consequences are harmful and ruinous and so Lord Kṛṣṇa has declared that his own self acts as his foe, because dependence on the mundane finally misleads a man to the shackles of birth and death.

Link:–What happens to the man who has conquered his base self by the divine self has been described in the next three verses.

जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः ॥ ७ ॥

Jitātmanaḥ praśāntasya paramātmā samāhitaḥ
śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu tathā mānāpamānayoḥ

The self-controlled man whose mind is perfectly calm in the midst of pairs of opposites such as cold and heat, joy and sorrow, honour and dishonour is in constant communion with the Supreme-Spirit. 7

Comment:

[In the sixth verse the term 'Anātmanaḥ' (of unconquered self) and here the term 'Jitātmanaḥ' (of the self-controlled) have been used. It means that the man who accepts his affinity of 'I'ness and 'Mineness' with the body etc., his own self acts as the foe. But the self-controlled person who does not accept his affinity with the mundane objects such as body etc., his own self is his friend. In this way the man of unconquered self ruins himself while the self-controlled man remains in communion with the Supreme-Spirit.]

'Jitātmanaḥ'— One who has not the least affinity with the mundane such as body, senses, mind and intellect etc., is self-disciplined or self-controlled. Such a self controlled man does good to himself as well as to the world.

'Śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu praśāntasya'— Here 'Śīta' and 'Uṣṇa' do not denote only cold and heat 'Śīta' and 'Uṣṇa' are only the objects of touch. A self-controlled person is really he who controls all senses from sense-objects. Therefore 'Śīta' and 'Uṣṇa' can't be taken in the limited sense. They denote favourable and

unfavourable circumstances. It means that he should not be pleased with favourable circumstances and incidents etc., and should not be displeased with unfavourable circumstances and incidents etc., but remain perfectly calm in the midst of the two.

In favourable circumstances a man feels a sort of coldness while in unfavourable circumstances he feels a kind of heat. A striver should be cautious that his permanent peace is not disturbed by this seemingly cold and heat. He should not be happy and sad with favourable and unfavourable circumstances.

Now let us try to understand 'Joy' and 'Sorrow':—

(i) Generally people think that the person who lives in luxury is joyful but one who can't enjoy luxuries is sorrowful.

(ii) The man does not possess even the bare necessities of life but is satisfied with what he possesses and is joyful while the man who leads a life of luxury but is worried at heart lest the luxuries should be lost is sad or sorrowful.

In the Gītā 'Sukha' and 'Duḥkha' have been described in two ways. The favourable circumstances and the pleasure derived out of them are called 'Sukha'. Similarly, the unfavourable circumstances and the sorrow derived from them are called 'Duḥkha'. Where in the Gītā it is said 'Samaduḥkhaḥ-sukhaḥ' (12/13; 14/24), 'Śītoṣṇasukha-duḥkheṣu samaḥ' (12/18), there it means that he remains even-minded in 'Sukha', and 'Duḥkha'. But where in the Gītā it is said 'Dvandvairvimuktaḥ sukhaduḥkha-saṁjñaiḥ', there it refers to devoid of 'Sukha' (pleasure) and 'Duḥkha' (pain). In the former case 'Sukha' and 'Duḥkha' have their entities but he remains equanimous without being affected by them. But in the latter case there is no entity of either 'Sukha' or 'Duḥkha'. In sum total both lead to the same goal.

Now a question rises why Lord Kṛṣṇa has used two pairs of opposites 'Śīta and Uṣṇa' (cold & heat) and 'Sukhaduḥkha' (joy and sorrow) when 'cold' and 'heat' also stand for favourable and unfavourable circumstances. The explanation is that the past-actions result in favourable and unfavourable circumstances, while the actions of the present result in success and failure (joy and sorrow). But the self-controlled man remains perfectly calm and serene in both.

This explanation seems to fit the context because the expression 'Nendriyārtheṣu anuṣjjate' used in the fourth verse of this chapter has been mentioned here by the expression 'Śīta-Uṣṇa' while the expression 'Na karmasu anuṣajjate' used there has been mentioned here by the expression 'Sukha-Duḥkha'. It means that there it is mentioned that he remains detached in favourable and unfavourable circumstances caused as the fruit of past actions and also in success and failure caused as the fruit of present actions. While here it is mentioned that he remains calm in both case.

'Tathā mānāpamānayoḥ'—He is perfectly calm in honour and dishonour also. Now a question rises that honour or dishonour is also the result of the actions of the past and therefore, is included in favourable and unfavourable circumstances. The explanation is that in favourable and unfavourable circumstances no one else becomes an instrument, while in honour and dishonour (including praise and censure) some one else becomes an instrument. But the self-controlled man remains calm whether he is honoured or dishonoured by others.

How to Remain Calm in Honour and Dishonour ?

In honour a striver should not think that it is the result of his virtuous or good actions but he should consider it a virtue of the person who has shown honour to him; while he should think of dishonour as a result of his past actions, and should feel obliged to the other person who has purged him of his sins by becoming an instrument in dishonour. Thus the striver will become clam in honour and dishonour.

'Paramātmā samāhitaḥ'—The equanimity in cold and heat, joy and sorrow,

honour and dishonour proves that he has attained God-Realization because without the internal bliss a man can't remain calm in the favourable and the unfavourable circumstances, success and failure and honour and dishonour. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Gītā has declared in 5/19,"The men whose mind is established in equanimity have conquered the mortal plane"; and in 6/22, He declares,"Getting into the infinite beatitude of the Self he does not reckon any other gain greater than that and wherein established he is not moved even by the heaviest affliction" and so on.

ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।
युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ॥ ८ ॥

jñānavijñānatṛptātmā kūṭastho vijitendriyaḥ
yukta ityucyate yogī samaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ

The Yogī whose mind is satisfied with 'Jñāna' (knowledge) and 'Vijñāna' (wisdom), who remains unshaken in all circumstances, whose senses are subdued, to whom a clod, a stone and a piece of gold are the same, is spoken of as one who has attained Yoga. 8

Comment:

'Jñānavijñānatṛptātmā'— Here is the context of the Discipline of Action. So here the knowledge how to perform an action is 'Jñāna' and equanimity in success and failure is 'Vijñāna'.

Action, thought and trance performed respectively with physical, subtle and causal body for one's own self is not knowledge (Jñāna) because they and their fruits have a beginning and an end. But he himself being a fragment of God is eternal. So how can the transient and insentient satisfy the eternal and sentient? This knowledge that the actions and their fruits can't satisfy his own self is knowledge (Jñāna). By having this knowledge, when a person remains equanimous in success and failure, that is called 'Vijñāna'. He himself gets satisfied with 'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna'. Thus for him nothing remains to be done, to be known and to be received.

'Kūṭasthaḥ'—'Kūṭa' is a block of iron on which things made of iron, silver and gold etc., are hammered into different shapes by smiths, but it remains the same. Similarly the self disciplined man remains unshaken in all circumstances.

'Vijitendriyaḥ'—A striver following the Discipline of Action has to conquer the senses because while performing actions he may have attachment and aversion. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa in 12/11 has said 'Subduing your mind, senses etc., relinquish the fruit of all actions.' It means that in abandoning the fruit of action, senses have to be subdued. Thus the striver who, while following the spiritual discipline, remains careful in subduing his senses, his senses are finally conquered when he realizes God.

'Samaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ'—To a Yogī a clod, a stone and a piece of gold are the same. In dealings he knows the value of each of them. So he keeps gold in the shelf while lets a clod and a stone lie outside. But he remains equanimous in gain and loss. He views all the things of the world with an equal eye because he knows that all of them are transient. He remains established in God Who pervades everywhere equally and His axiomatic equanimity abides in him.

'Yukta ityucyate yogī'— Such a Karmayogī satisfied with 'Jñāna' (knowledge) and 'Vijñāna' (wisdom), unshaken in all circumstances, with senses subdued, and equanimous is spoken of as a Yogī viz., one who has attained Yoga or equanimity.

सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।
साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥ ९ ॥

suhṛnmitrāryudāsīnamadhyasthadveṣyabandhuṣu
sādhuṣvapi ca pāpeṣu samabuddhirviśiṣyate

He who regards well-wishers, friends, foes, neutrals, mediators, the hateful, the relatives, saints and sinners alike, stands supreme. 9

Comment:

[In the eighth verse there is description of equanimity in objects while here there is description of equanimity in persons. The objects can't perform any action while persons perform actions for themselves and also for others. So it is difficult for them to have equanimity. Therefore the person who has a benevolent and impartial attitude to all and regards them alike even after noticing differences in their conduct stands supreme.]

'Suhṛnmitrāryudāsīnamadhyasthadveṣyabandhuṣu'— One who is engrossed in the welfare of others like a mother without any selfish motive is called 'Suhṛd' (disinterested friend), while one who returns good for good is a friend.

The foe is he who does evil to others without any cause but the hateful is one who does evils to others having some selfish motive or any other cause.

The neutral is he who remains indifferent to the two groups or men if they are fighting and the mediator is he who desires compromise for the welfare of both.

He has a benevolent and impartial attitude towards his relatives as well as those hostile to him.

'Sādhuṣvapi ca pāpeṣu samabuddhirviśiṣyate'— His dealing with saints and sinners is different but he thinks about the welfare of both of them and also does good to them equally because according to him all the persons are different manifestations of the same Divinity. As the Lord is the disinterested friend of all beings (Gītā 5/29), the Yogī is also the disinterested friend of all beings (Śrīmad Bhāgavata 3/25/21).

Here Lord Kṛṣṇa by using the phrase 'Sādhuṣvapi ca pāpeṣu' means to say that if he regards the saints and the sinners alike, he will regard all the people alike because men are judged by their actions. The Lord also lays emphasis on conduct (actions) by declaring, "Whatever a great man does, the same is done by others" (Gītā 3/21). If he regards the men who perform virtuous actions and also those who perform evil actions alike, it means that he stands supreme because it is difficult to have a benign and equanimous attitude to the sinners.

In the world people generally have a tendency to observe the actions of others. By doing so they can't observe their real self who remains the same while the actions always undergo changes. Secondly they specially observe the evil actions of others which mislead the observers to degradation because by doing so they attach great importance to those evil actions. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa in this verse has explained that a Yogī regards saints and sinners alike because he views that God alone puts on the appearance of the phenomenon and so all this is God. Thus the Yogī stands supreme.

An Exceptional Fact

According to the gospel of the Gītā 'Equanimity is called Yoga' (2/48). One who attains equanimity doesn't need any other virtue for God-Realization. He becomes wholly virtuous spontaneously, and he conquers the mortal plane (5/19). In Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Prahlāda has said that equanimity is God's adoration (1/17/90). We can attain such a significant equanimity by being free from evils. The means to be free from evils

are (i) Don't regard anyone as evil. (ii) Don't do any harm to anyone. (iii) Don't think ill of anyone. (iv) Don't perceive evils in others. (v) Don't hear evils of others. (vi) Don't speak ill of others. By following these six principles we shall be free from evils and as soon as we are free from evils, we shall become virtuous, because virtue is our real nature.

We make efforts and follow the spiritual discipline in order to become virtuous. But we don't become virtuous because we don't renounce evils altogether and even a fragment of an evil arouses pride of having virtue which misleads to several other evils. But when evils are rooted out, we become virtuous spontaneously. When we become virtuous, we automatically do good to others. By doing so, all the world provides us the necessities of life without our asking for it and without working hard. Thus we cease our dependence on the world. This freedom from dependence on the world enables us to attain equanimity which is axiomatic and then we have nothing to do, we become liberated souls.

Link:–Equanimity (evenness of mind) which is attained by the Discipline of Action is also attained by the Discipline of Meditation. So Lord Kṛṣṇa here while starting the subject of meditation gives inspiration for meditation.

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।
एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥ १० ॥

yogī yuñjīta satatamātmānaṁ rahasi sthitaḥ
ekākī yatacittātmā nirāśīraparigrahaḥ

A Yogī should constantly engage his mind in meditation living alone in seclusion, having subdued his mind and body and having got rid of desires and possessions. 10

Comment:

[Here Lord Kṛṣṇa is describing in detail the Discipline of Meditation which was described in brief in the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth verses of the fifth chapter. Here the word 'Yoga', which has been derived from the root 'Yuj samādhau' means controlling the activities of the mind.]

'Aparigrahaḥ'— Meditation is practised by disinclination for the world and inclination to God. For this practice the first means to be adopted is 'Aparigrahaḥ'. 'Aprigrahaḥ' means freedom from accumulation of possessions. Nothing should be accumulated for one's pleasures, because the mind is attracted towards possessions and pleasures and so it can't be engaged in meditation.

'Nirāśīḥ'— It means that the striver should not be free from outward prosperity and pleasures only but also should get rid of desires and hopes for prosperity and pleasures because they are obstacles to God-Realization. Therefore a striver should always be aware of these desires and hopes.

'Yatacittātmā'— Even by renouncing pleasures and prosperity and also desire for them, there is possibility of attachment. Therefore, a striver should keep his body and mind under control. By controlling them, new attachment will not be aroused. The means to control them is that no action should be performed being attached to it because attachment misleads the body to laziness and idleness, senses to pleasures, and mind to the thought of pleasures and futile thinking.

'Yogī'— The Yogī is one who is devoted to meditation, whose aim is only God-Realization rather than enjoyments and accomplishments.

'Ekākī'—A striver should live alone without any assistant because in the company he is likely to be engaged in conversation and in his absence because of attachment to

him he is likely to be haunted by him. Thus he will not be able to meditate on God.

'Rahasi sthitaḥ'—A striver should live in seclusion on the bank of a river, or in a forest or a temple or a lonely room meant for adoration and meditation only. The atmosphere should be such as there is no hindrance in meditation.

'Ātmānaṁ satataṁ yuñjīta'— Thus a striver living alone in seclusion as mentioned above should concentrate his mind on God with a firm determination that he has to be engaged only in meditation without having the least thought of the worldly affairs, whatsoever may happen. He should be on the alert because alertness is spiritual discipline.

A striver should think of God not only at the time of meditation but also while performing other actions without any attachment to them, because this thought of God helps in meditation while the thought of God in meditation helps the striver in thinking of Him during his mundane affairs. It means that a striver should always remember that he is a striver viz., he should always remember God and think of Him even when he performs the worldly actions. He should harbour no thought of any worldly transaction otherwise it will put hindrence in his meditation. Therefore while sitting for meditation he should have a firm resolve that he has to meditate only on God whatsoever may happen. By this sort of resolve it will be easy for him to meditate on God.

A striver has a complaint that he can't concentrate his mind on God. The reason is that he wants to concentrate his mind on God without breaking off his affinity for the world. Therefore, a striver should break off his affinity for the world because it is this affinity or attachment or the sense of mine which attracts the mind. Therefore, a striver can concentrate his mind and engage in meditation by having the only aim for God-Realization and being detached from all the persons and things etc. If such detachment is not there, they will haunt his memory.

An Exceptional Fact

Initially Arjuna was prepared to wage the war and he also got prepared at last. But in between he thought that it was a sin. Thus it was a question of performing an action or not to perform it. So it was the context of the Discipline of Action. But how were other disciplines such as of Knowledge, Devotion and Meditation included in it ?

Arjuna retreats from the war because he thinks that sin will accrue to him by killing his kinsmen. So he requests Lord Kṛṣṇa to tell him what is good for him (2/7; 3/2; 5/1). Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa explains to him the different means including gifts, rituals, penances, study of the Vedas and different kinds of disciplines. But in all the means Lord Kṛṣṇa has emphasized the fact that the aim to attain the perishable things is the main obstacle to God-Realization. If a striver has the only aim for God-Realization and performs actions with equanimity those actions will lead him to salvation or God-Realization.

Link:–In the previous verse Lord Kṛṣṇa gave inspiration for meditation. Now in the next three verses He explains what sort of setting one should have and what process he should undergo.

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।
नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥ ११ ॥

śucau deśe pratiṣṭhāpya sthiramāsanamātmanaḥ
nātyucchritaṁ nātinīcaṁ cailājinakuśottaram

Having firmly fixed his seat in a clean place with Kuśa-grass, a deer skin and a cloth, one over the other, neither too high nor too low. 11

Comment:

'Śucau deśe'—The place is clean in two ways– (i) The naturally pure place such as the bank of the Ganges, forest and the place near the holy basil, myrobalan (Āṁvalā), Peepala tree etc. (ii) Place cleaned with cow-dung and by sprinkling water or by removing two inches of soil from the surface. The clean place of natural beauty invigorates and elevates the mind.

'Cailājinakuśottaram'—According to the text a Kuśa-grass mat, a deer skin, and a cloth should be spread one over the other* yet there should be spread a Kuśa mat below, a deer skin in the middle and a cloth at the top. The deer skin should be of the deer which is not killed, but which is dead in the natural way because the skin of the deer which is killed is regarded as impure. If a deer-skin is not available, a rug can be spread. Over the rug soft cotton cloth should be spread. Kuśa-grass is supposed to be made from the hair of boar-incarnation of the Lord and thus is considered holy. Deer-skin is spread over Kuśā-grassmat so that Kuśā-grass may not prick the skin and the electric current of the body may not pass through the Kuśā-grass to the earth because deer-skin is a bad conductor of electric current. A soft cotton cloth is spread over the deer-skin so that the bristles of deer-skin may not stick the body and the striver may feel comfortable.

'Nātyucchritaṁ nātinīcam'— The seat of the plank-bed should neither be too high nor too low because if it is too high, the striver while meditating may doze and fall down and be injured; but if it is too low, the creeping insects may disturb him in his meditation.

'Pratiṣṭhāpya sthirmāsana-mātmanaḥ'— The platform or the plank-bed should be fixed firmly. Moreover it should belong to him and be used by him only because there are bacilli in it of others, if it is also used by them. Similarly a striver should have his own rosary, bag for the rosary and the spoon used in religious ceremonies etc. Not only this but according to the ordinance of the scriptures a striver should not use the seat, shoes and shirts etc., of others otherwise he has to be a sharer in their virtues and sins. One should not sit on the seat of the saints and ascetics because it is a dishonour to them if one touches their seats and clothes etc., with feet and it is also a sin.

तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।
उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥ १२ ॥

tatraikāgraṁ manaḥ kṛtvā yatacittendriyakriyaḥ
upaviśyāsaṇe yuñjyādyogamātmaviśuddhaye

Sitting there on his seat, concentrating the mind and controlling the thinking faculty and the senses, he should practise Yoga for self-purification. 12

Comment:

[After explaining the seat, now Lord Kṛṣṇa in the twelfth and thirteenth verses explains the process how he should practise meditation.]

'Tatra āsane'—This phrase has been used for the seat with a Kuśa-grassmat, a deer-skin and a cloth, described in the previous verse.

'Upaviśya'—He should sit on the seat

* The order of the text does not seem reasonable and proper because Kuśa-grass pricks the body. Therefore, it should be interpreted as a Kuśa-grassmat below, a deer-skin in the middle and a cloth at the top, because the order of the meaning is more forceful than the order of the text.

with some comfortable posture as 'Siddhāsana' 'Padmāsana' or 'Sukhāsana' etc., without moving the body. It is said about the posture that the striver should be able to sit in that posture continuously for three hours without moving the body. By doing so the mind and life-breath naturally become calm, free from volatility. Volatility of mind does not allow the body to remain motionless. The motion of the body and urge for action don't allow the mind to remain calm. Therefore it is very essential that the body should remain motionless.

'Yatacittendriyakriyaḥ'—While sitting on the seat the mind and the senses should be kept under control. A striver should control his body, senses and mind even in practical life otherwise they can't be controlled easily while he meditates. It means that he should lead a regulated and disciplined life as has also been pointed out, in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses of this chapter.

'Ekāgraṁ manaḥ kṛtvā'—While meditating he should make a firm resolve that he has to engage himself only in meditation. If however worldly thoughts crop up, he should think that it is time only for meditation, not for worldly thoughts. If time passes in worldly thoughts, no purpose will be served and he will be a loser in both ways. Thus he should concentrate his mind on God without having any thought of the mundane affairs. Even then if a worldly thought comes to the mind, he should neither support it nor oppose it. By doing so the thought will disappear because it is transitory. The thought affects him only if he accepts his affinity with it. But if he remains indifferent, it will automatically perish because it is perishable and transient. In the world there are good and bad actions. We don't have any affinity with them. So they don't affect us. Similarly during meditation if we don't have any affinity with thoughts, our mind will not get tainted. It will be calm and composed.

'Yuñjyādyogamātmaviśuddhaye'—He should practise the Yoga of meditation for self-purification. Desire for worldly things, pleasures, honour, praise, name and fame etc., is impurity of the self and by renouncing all the desires, to have the only aim for God-Realization is self-purification.

Yoga is a power which can be used either for accomplishing worldly pleasures or for God-Realization. If it is used for accomplishments, it can't be helpful in self purification or God-Realization. But if it is used for God-Realization, it will be conducive to God-Realization.

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।
संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥ १३ ॥

samaṁ kāyaśirogrīvaṁ dhārayannacalaṁ sthiraḥ
saṁprekṣya nāsikāgraṁ svaṁ diśaścānavalokayan

Let him hold the trunk, head and neck straight and steady, looking at the tip of his nose without looking around. 13

Comment:

'Samaṁ kāyaśirogrīvaṁ dhārayannacalam'—The portion of the body from neck to waist is called 'Kāya' (trunk) while the portion from neck to top is called head. All postures are useful for meditation and health point of view. Out of those postures Lord Kṛṣṇa has taken the essential feature, necessary for meditation to keep neck, back and head in a straight position. While meditating, the trunk, head and neck should be held straight so that the spinal cord may remain vertical. In this posture the mind becomes calms and concentrated very soon. If he bends forward, he feels drowsy, if he bends backward there is stupor and if he bends sideways he becomes capricious. If he feels drowsy, he should walk a little and then

again with a firm determination should practise meditation by hodling the trunk, head and neck straight.

'Diśaścānavalokayan'— He should not look in any direction, because by looking here and there, the neck will bend which will disturb his meditation. So the neck should be held straight.

'Samprekṣya nāsikāgram svam'— He should look at the tip of his nose with his half closed eyes. If he closes his eyes, he may feel sleepy. But if the eyes are open, he is likely to look at the other objects which are within sight and so there may be obstruction in meditation. Thus here Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that he should keep his eyes half closed because by doing so the eye-balls assume steadiness and seem as if they are looking at the tip of the nose.

'Sthiraḥ'— He should sit steady without any activity of the body or senses just like a statue continuously for three hours. Moreover there should not be any activity of the mind also. By doing so he will overcome the posture and will become 'Jitāsana' (conqueror of the posture).

Link:–The blissful meditation (Yoga) on God endowed with attribute and form and the good flowing out of it have been explained in the next two verses.

प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।
मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत मत्परः ॥ १४ ॥

praśāntātma vigatabhīrbrahmacārivrate sthitaḥ
manaḥ saṁyamya maccitto yukta āsīta matparaḥ

Serene and fearless, firm in the vow of continence, subdued in mind, the vigilant Yogī should sit thinking of Me and having Me as the Supreme Goal. 14

Comment:

'Praśāntātmā'—Serene minded is he who is free from attachment and aversion. Attachment and aversion of the striver whose aim is only God-Realization without having any worldly desire, by becoming languid, perish, and with the disappearance of attachment and aversion the striver attains peace which is spontaneous. It means that attachment and aversion born of the affinity with the world disturb serenity or peace. One who attains this peace is serene-minded.

'Vigatabhīḥ'—Fears of disease, censure, dishonour and death arise only because he accepts the affinity of I'ness and Mineness with the body. But when he abandons this affinity, he becomes free from all fears because he thinks that even if the body perishes, it will make no difference as his mind being dedicated to God, he will attain salvation, the ultimate goal of life.

'Brahmacārivrate sthitaḥ'—Here it does not mean only vow of continence but also includes that a celibate should lead a disciplined and controlled life according to the order of his preceptor, free from sensual pleasures, honour, praise and comforts etc. He should not in the least enjoy worldly things in any state under any circumstance either during meditation or in practical life but use them as necessities of life.

'Manaḥ saṁyamya maccittaḥ'— Having controlled the mind from all the worldly affairs, he should think of His form, play, virtues, glory and excellence etc. It means that shutting out all worldly thoughts he should devote his mind to God only. The thoughts that come to the mind are either of the past or the present. So he should neglect them by thinking that they have no existence at present. Moreover the world actually does not exist, it merely seems to exist while God existed in the past, exists now and will also

exist in future. So he should think of Him instead of thinking about the world.

'Yuktaḥ'—He should remain vigilant in diverting his mind from the worldly affairs and concentrating it on God even while engaged in worldly affairs, because vigilance during engagement in worldly affairs will help him in meditation, and that during meditation will be helpful to him in his practical life.

'Āsīta matparaḥ'—While sitting he should have the only aim of God-Realization without having any other desire or lust or attachment or mineness in the least as has also been pointed out in the tenth verse of this chapter.

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः ।
शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥ १५ ॥

yuñjannevaṁ sadātmānaṁ yogī niyatamānasaḥ
śāntiṁ nirvāṇaparamāṁ matsaṁsthāmadhigacchati

Thus constantly applying his mind to Me, the Yogī of subdued mind attains the ever lasting peace consisting of Supreme Bliss which abides in Me. 15

Comment:

'Yogī niyatamānasaḥ'—One who has controlled his mind is called 'Niyatamānasaḥ'. The Yogī's mind can be subdued only if his exclusive aim is God-Realization without having any affinity with the world. Affinity with the world does not allow the mind to be subdued.

A striver commits an error because he thinks that he is a householder having some caste, creed and colour etc. Thus he can't meditate. A striver should think that he is a striver whose only aim is to meditate on God. His aim is not to attain mystic power. Thus by changing his 'I'ness he will be able to concentrate his mind on God. With the change of 'I' senses and innersense automatically change.

'Yuñjannevaṁ sadātmānam'—The word 'Evam' (thus) has been used for meditation and concentration of mind described from the tenth to the fourteenth verses.

'Yuñjan ātmānam' means that the striver should concentrate his mind on God diverting it from the world. 'Sadā' means that he should practise meditation regularly, in seclusion and daily life always having the aim of God-Realization. Such practice leads to an early success.

'Śāntiṁ nirvāṇaparamāṁ matsaṁsthāmadhigacchati'— This is the state wherein established nothing remains to be attained. This state is called Supreme-Peace or Supreme-Bliss or emancipation or salvation. A striver attains peace by breaking off affinity with the world while he attains Supreme-Peace by attaining God-Realization. The process of meditation culminates in 'Nirvikalpa sthiti' (state of mind where there is absence of all thoughts). But this is also a state as it does not remain constant, there is deviation from it at times. This is not God-Realization. Further to it there is 'Nirvikalpa bodha'. This is Self-Realization (God-Realization). This is called Supreme-Peace. The same Supreme-Peace (in 5/12) has been called 'Naiṣṭhikīm Śāntim' (Final Peace) and (in 9/31) 'Śāśvacchānti' (Eternal Peace).

Link:–In the next two verses there is the description of the regulations that the Yogī has to observe in his earthly life.

नात्यश्नतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्नतः ।
न चाति स्वप्नशीलस्य जाग्रतो नैव चार्जुन ॥ १६ ॥

nātyaśnatastu yogo'sti na caikāntamanaśnataḥ
na cāti svapnaśīlasya jāgrato naiva cārjuna

Yoga is not for him who eats too much nor for him who does not eat at all, nor for him who sleeps too much or too little. 16

Comment:

'Nātyaśnatastu yogo'sti'— Yoga is not possible for him who eats too much*. Too much eating causes thirst for water. So he has to drink much water. Too much water makes stomach heavy and the body too. If he over-eats he becomes dull and lazy and may suffer from indigestion. Indigestion causes diseases in the body. So he can't concentrate his mind in adoration and spiritual practice etc. So how can Yoga be possible for him ?

'Na caikāntamanaśnataḥ'— Yoga is also not possible for him who eats too little. If he is under fed he will feel hungry, will think of the food again and again and become weak. His body will languish and life will become hard to live. He will be inclined to keep lying. It will be hard to sit for meditation. Thus he can't concentrate his mind on God. So how is Yoga possible for him?

'Na cāti svapnaśīlasya'— Oversleep makes a striver idle, lazy and inert. In oversleep the striver can't sleep soundly and so different thoughts come to the mind. Thus oversleep is a hindrance to the practice of meditation.

'Jāgrato naiva cārjuna'— This Yoga is not possible for him who sleeps too little. By sleeping too little he feels drowsy and can't practise meditation.

Men of Sāttvika (Thought attribute) disposition while having spiritual discussions, narrating and listening to the lives of saints, devotees and incarnations of God have so much relish and get so much engrossed in them that they don't feel drowsy at all even by remaining awake throughout the night. This wakeful conduces them to the state which transcends the three modes of Nature.

Similarly the devotees in adoration, loud chanting and constant remembrance of God are so much engrossed that they don't feel hungry.

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।
युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥ १७ ॥

yuktāhāravihārasya yuktaceṣṭasya karmasu
yuktasvapnāvabodhasya yogo bhavati duḥkhahā

Yoga becomes the destroyer of pain for him who is moderate in diet and recreation, temperate in actions and regulated in sleep and wakefulness. 17

Comment:

'Yuktāhāravihārasya'— The food (livelihood) should be earned by honest means, it should be pure, easily digestible, light, a bit less than required and should be eaten in accordance with the ordinance of the scriptures and Āyurveda. Recreation such as physical exercise and walking etc., should be resorted to moderately.

'Yuktaceṣṭasya karmasu'— The actions should be performed according to one's caste, creed, country, condition and capacity, following the ordinance of the scriptures, happily for the welfare of others.

'Yuktasvapnāvabodhasya'— He should be moderate in sleep. He should remain awake in the day, go to bed early at night and rise early in the morning. Here the term 'Avabodhasya' (wakefulness) has a

* If a person's food is less than that of others but is more than his appetite, it is known as too much.

special meaning that the striver should be spiritually aroused because this human life has been bestowed upon him to attain salvation. The term 'Yukta' (Moderate) means that similar rules don't apply to all the persons in diet, recreations, actions, sleep and wakefulness. But everyone should be moderate in them according to the circumstances he is in.

'Yogo bhavati duḥkhahā'—Thus the Yoga of a Yogī who is moderate in diet, recreation etc., brings about the cessation of the travails of the world.

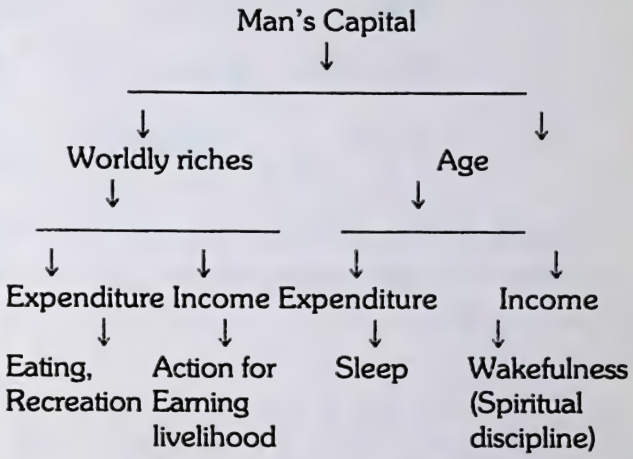
There is an uncommon difference between Yoga (meditation) and Bhoga (pleasure). In 'Yoga' there is abnegation of 'Bhoga'. In 'Bhoga' there is not total negation of 'Yoga'. In 'Bhoga' what happiness a man derives, is the result of disconnection from contact with the unreal. But the man does not pay attention to this fact and thinks that there is pleasure in the contact of the worldly things. So he gets attached to sense-objects. He can't experience this Yoga which brings about the cessation of travails of the world. In this Yoga there is total negation of worldly enjoyments.

An Exceptional Fact

This verse on meditation is useful for all strivers. By following it they may attain salvation. There are four factors described in it—moderate in diet and recreation, moderate in actions, moderate in sleep and moderate in wakefulness.

We have twenty-four hours at our disposal. If twenty-four hours are divided into four parts, we get six hours for each of the above activities (i) six hours for eating, recreation and physical exercise etc. (ii) six hours for actions and for earning livelihood viz., farming, business and service etc. (iii). six hours for sleep (iv) six hours for wakefulness viz., meditation, adoration, constant remembrance and loud chanting etc., for God-Realization.

They can be divided into two parts (i) Income (ii) Expenditure. Actions and wakefulness are the means of income while eating, recreation and sleep incur expenditure. For income and expenditure we have two kinds of capital—(i) Worldly riches (capital) (ii) Age.



Let us think about the worldly capital (worldly riches). If a person earns more, it will do. But if his expenses are more than income it will not do, it will ruin him. If a person devotes only four hours to eating and recreation etc., he may devote eight hours to his profession, earning his livelihood.

Now let us think about age. If he gets refreshed by four hours' sleep, he should devote eight hours to adoration, meditation, and spiritual discipline. This spiritual discipline should be enhanced everyday because we have come here for God-Realization, not for accumulation of mundane wealth etc.

Secondly, we should remember God while earning our livelihood and also while we go to bed. At the bed-time the striver should think that he has to devote that time to devotion and adoration while lying in the bed. While lying if he sleeps, it is O.K. but he should not have the aim of sleeping. Again when he wakes after sleep, he should again be engaged in adoration, meditation, devotion and study of the scriptures etc. While discharging his duty or performing actions he should always remember God. Thus each and every activity of his life will become part and parcel of adoration.

Link:–In the preceding two verses the regulations that the Yogī has to observe in his earthly life have been described. Now in the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains when a striver is said to be established in Yoga.

यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते ।
निःस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ॥ १८ ॥

yadā viniyatam cittamātmanyevāvatiṣṭhte
niḥspṛhaḥ sarvakāmebhyo yukta ityucyate tadā

When the perfectly controlled mind rests in the self alone, free from desires for all enjoyments, then the person is said to be established in Yoga. 18

Comment:

[In this chapter from the tenth to the thirteenth verses there is description of the setting and the process of meditation. In fourteenth and fifteenth verses there is description of meditation on God (with attributes and form) with its fruit. In sixteenth and seventeenth verses there is mention of regulations for all strivers of meditation. In the verses from the eighteenth to the twenty-third there is description of meditation with its result.]

'Yadā viniyatam cittamātmanyevāvatiṣṭhte'— 'When the well disciplined mind* free from the thought of the world gets established in the self which ever remains the same without any modification.' In the self there is relish or bliss which does not let the mind deviate from it and thus the mind by having this relish, gets engrossed in it.

'Niḥspṛhaḥ sarvakāmebhyo yukta ityucyate tadā'— When he becomes completely free from desires for all objects and pleasures, here as well as hereafter he is called a Yogī.

The terms 'Yadā' (When) and 'Tadā' (Then) denote that as soon as a person with disciplined mind rests in the self alone, free from desires for enjoyments, he becomes a Yogī.

An Exceptional Fact

In this verse there are two important factors— one is that the mind should rest in the self and the other is that it should be free from desires for all objects etc. It means that when the mind gets focussed in the self, the mind does not think of any objects, persons or circumstances etc., but gets engrossed in the self. Similarly if the mind rests in the self, the Yogī becomes completely free from all desires, lusts and hopes etc. Not only this but he has no desire even to have the bare necessities of life, and then he is a Yogī in the true sense of the term.

The same state has been hinted at in the fourth verse of this chapter for a Karmayogī when the Lord declares, "When a man ceases to have attachment to sense-objects or to actions and renounces all thoughts of the world, he is said to have attained Yoga (6/4). The difference is that a Karmayogī performs actions for others only. So he gets totally detached from actions and objects. Then he attains Yoga. Here a Dhyānayogī concentrates his mind on the self and when the mind gets established in the self, he has no desire for actions and objects and even for the

* The five assumed stages of the mind are—'Mūḍha' (stupid), 'Ksipta' (blasphemous), 'Viksipta' (confused), 'Ekāgra' (concentrated) and 'Niruddha' (tied up). In the first two stages a striver is not entitled for Yoga. The person with a Viksipta (confused) mind is entitled for Yoga, his mind sometimes rests but sometimes does not rest in the self. When the mind is concentrated, that is called 'Savikalpa samādhi' (doubtful trance). But the next stage is when the mind is completely settled and that is called 'Nirvikalpa samādhi' (fixed trance) or Yoga. Here in 'Viniyatam cittam' as well as in the fifteenth verse of this chapter, there is the hint of 'Savikalpa samādhi'.

bare necessities of life. If means that a Karmayogī's desires are first wiped out and then he attains Yoga while a Dhyānayogī's mind first gets established in the self and then his desires are wiped out. Thus a Karmayogī applies his mind to the service of the world and gets established in the self while the mind of a Dhyānayogī gets established in the self.

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ।
योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः ॥ १९ ॥

yathā dīpo nivātastho neṅgate sopamā smṛtā
yogino yatacittasya yuñjato yogamātmanaḥ

'As a lamp in a windless place does not flicker' this is the simile used for the disciplined mind of a Yogī practising meditation on the Self. 19

Comment:

'Yathā dīpo nivātastho neṅgate sopamā smṛtā yogino yatacittasya yuñjato yogamātmanaḥ'—As the flame of a lamp in a place perfectly sheltered against wind does not flicker but remains steady, in the same way when the mind of the striver rests in the Self alone, it becomes free from all sorts of desires.

The Yogī who has subdued his mind is called 'Yatacittasya'. In the preceding verse such controlled mind has been described as 'Viniyata'.

There is no place without wind. It prevails everywhere. Some where it is in its active form while at other place it is inactive. Here the term 'Nivātasthaḥ' does not refer to total lack of wind, it rather refers to the absence of its active state.

Now the question may rise why the mind has been compared to the flame of a lamp which may flicker, not to the mountain which neither flickers nor shakes. The answer is that unlike the mountain the mind is flickering like flame. It is very difficult to keep the flickering thing steady. So it has been compared to a flame. Secondly as there is light in the flame there is light of God in the mind. Though in sound sleep and trance there is equal forgetfulness of the world. Yet in sound sleep the mind merges in ignorance and so there is no awareness of the self. But in trance the mind remains conscious of the self. So the illustration of the flame has been given here. This fact has also been pointed out in the twenty-seventh verse of the fourth chapter by 'Jñānadīpite' (self controlled mind kindled by wisdom viz., the identification of the mind with the self).

Link:—The state in which perfection is attained is described in the next verse.

यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।
यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ॥ २० ॥

yatroparamate cittaṁ niruddhaṁ yogasevayā
yatra caivātmanātmānaṁ paśyannātmani tuṣyati

When the mind, disciplined by the practice of Yoga becomes indifferent and when the Yogī beholding the Self by the Self, he is satisfied in the self. 20

Comment:

'Yatroparamate cittaṁ niruddhaṁ yogasevayā yatra caivātmanātmānaṁ paśyannātmani tuṣyati' —The

determination to practise meditation on the self is 'Dhāraṇā' while the continuous flow of the mind, towards the self disregarding other thoughts is called 'Dhyāna' (meditation). In meditation there is a trio—the meditative (one who meditates), meditation and the aim to be achieved viz., self. So long as there is knowledge about this trio, it is meditation. But when the mind gets so much engrossed in the aim that nothing remains except the aim, that state is called 'Samādhi' (trance). This is called 'Saṁprajñāta samādhi'. After practising it for a long time it is changed into 'Asaṁprajñāta samādhi'. The distinction between the two is that in the former consciousness of the trio of the meditative, meditation and the object of meditation persists. But in the latter only the object of meditation remains by becoming oblivious of the two. The former is also called 'Ekāgra' (concentration of mind) while the latter 'Niruddha' (tied up state).

The 'Samādhi' (trance) of 'Niruddha' state (tied up state) is also of two types—'Sabīja' (with seed) and 'Nirbīja' (without seed). In the former because of subtle desire 'Siddhiyān' (accomplishments) appear. These accomplishments are in the form of worldly riches which are obstacles to God-Realization or Self-Realization. Therefore regarding them as meaningless, a Yogī becomes quite indifferent to them and then he rises to the height of 'Nirbīja samādhi' (trance without seed) which in this verse has been hinted 'Niruddham' (tied up state of trance).

In meditation while having disinclination for the mundane, a striver gets joy or peace which is far superior to the mundane pleasures. This joy enhances as a striver rises to the higher states of trance by practising meditation. While rising he reaches that stage of 'Nirbīja samādhi' (trance without seed). If he does not enjoy that state of joy, he is satisfied in the self.

'Uparamate' (attains quietness) means that mind, being insentient can't catch the self which is sentient. So it becomes quiet and at this moment a Yogī ceases all affinity with the mind.

'Tuṣyati' means that he is not satisfied with anything else except the self.

The gist of this verse is that a Yogī realizes the self in him by his own self because the Self ever remains the same. Our affinity with the world is the only obstacle to realize it. When by meditation the mind becomes quiet, the Yogī's affinity with the mind and the world is renounced and he realizes the Self in his own self.

An Exceptional Fact

The aim of human life can be achieved by both the Discipline of Meditation as well as the Discipline of Action. But there is a little difference between the two. In meditation when the mind of a striver becomes quiet and does not enjoy the state of trance, he is satisfied in the Self by the Self. In the Discipline of Action when a striver abandons all desires of the mind, he is satisfied in the self by the self (Gītā 2/55).

In the Discipline of Meditation when the mind identifies itself with the Self, the Yogī experiences trance. When he does not enjoy that state, his affinity with the mind is broken off and he is satisfied in the self.

In the Discipline of Action when there is flow of all the actions, senses, mind, intellect and body etc., for the welfare of others, all the desires are abandoned. As soon as the desires are abondoned, the Yogī's affinity with the mind is broken off and he is satisfied in the Self.

Link:–What happens after the Yogī is satisfied in the Self by the self, is described in the next verse.

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद्बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।
वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः ॥ २१ ॥

sukhamātyantikaṁ yattadbuddhigrāhyamatīndriyam
vetti yatra na caivāyaṁ sthitaścalati tattvataḥ

When he feels that supreme bliss which is perceived only by intelligence (Reason) and which transcends the senses and wherein established the said Yogī never moves from Reality. 21

Comment:

'Sukhamātyantikaṁ yat'— The bliss which a Yogī feels is infinite and there can't be any bliss greater than this bliss, because it transcends the three attributes (modes) and is axiomatic. This bliss has been called imperishable bliss (5/21), infinite bliss (6/28) and absolute bliss (14/27).

This bliss has been called infinite here because it is superior to the Sāttvika (thought attribute) joy which is born of the placidity of mind by meditation on God. This infinite bliss is not born, but it is unborn and axiomatic.

'Atīndriyam'—This supreme bliss transcends the sensual pleasures. It means that it is superior to the Rājasika (physical attribute) joy which is derived from the contact of the senses with their objects. It is beyond our power to obtain Rājasika joy because it is beyond our power to obtain desired individuals sense-objects. So we are dependent to obtain it while there is no dependence in attaining infinite bliss because that is beyond the access of the senses as well as the mind. That can be felt by one's own self.

'Buddhigrāhyam'—It means that it is superior to the Tāmasika (darkness attribute) joy which is derived from sleep, indolence and carelessness. A man derives joy from sound sleep but in sound sleep mind is merged. Joy is also derived from indolence and heedlessness but at that time mind is not awake and discrimination is lost. But in infinite bliss the mind is not merged, nor is the discrimination lost. It is beyond the access of intellect because intellect is the evolute of Matter while bliss is the characteristic of the Self which is beyond Matter.

Thus in this verse it has been explained that this supreme bliss is far superior to the Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika joy, it transcends the three.

'Vetti yatra na caivāyaṁ sthitaścalati tattvataḥ'— The Yogī feels the bliss in his own self and established there he does not move from Reality viz., this bliss continues endlessly spontaneously. For example the Muslims imprisoned Śivājī's son Saṁbhājī, made him blind and stripped off his skin to force him to embrace their religion. But he did not embrace their religion and thus he didn't go astray viz., didn't move from his religion. It means that nothing can force a person to move from his beliefs. When nothing can force a person to move from his beliefs, how can any one force a Yogī to deviate from the supreme bliss or how can he himself abandon that supreme bliss? He can't.

It means that a man never moves from the Supreme Bliss because bliss is the characteristic of the Self (Soul). He moves only when there is the least affinity with the Matter. Thus by affinity for Matter a man may have a downfall even from Trance. So long as he has affinity for the Matter, his self can't merge in the Cosmic Self because Matter is always active.

Link:–Why a Yogī does not move form Reality is described in the next verse.

यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।
यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ॥ २२ ॥

yaṁ labdhvā cāparaṁ lābhaṁ manyate nādhikaṁ tataḥ
yasminsthito na duḥkhena guruṇāpi vicālyate

And having gained which, he does not reckon any other gain greater than that, and wherein established he is not shaken even by the heaviest affliction. 22

Comment:

'Yaṁ labdhvā cāparaṁ lābhaṁ manyate nādhikaṁ tataḥ'—When a person expects more happiness in something else than what he is possessed of, there is every possibility of his reverting to it. A man wants to attain the Supreme Bliss, or infinite bliss. He runs after sleep, indolence and heedlessness, the Tāmasik joy. But he abandons it because he feels that the joy derived from the contact of the senses with their objects is pleasanter than this one. He abandons it also when he feels that the Sāttvika joy which is born by the placidity of mind by meditation on God is superior to it. But he abandons it too when he feels the Supreme Bliss. There is no greater bliss than it. By gaining this he has nothing else to seek because there is no gain greater than this.

'Yasminsthito na duḥkhena guruṇāpi vicālyate'—A man may also abandon something if it results in affliction in spite of its gain. A man may abandon an attempt to achieve a goal if he feels that there is some danger. But here Lord Kṛṣṇa says that a Yogī having been established in the Supreme Bliss cannot be shaken even by the heaviest affliction. If he is hanged, or his limbs are broken to pieces, or his body is ground to powder between mill-stones, or his skin is stripped off his body, or his body is put into boiling oil, he is not shaken.

Why is he not shaken even by the heaviest affliction? The reason is that a Yogī established in the Supreme Bliss has no body consciousness. So the harm inflicted on the body does not inflict him. He feels pain or affliction only if he identifies himself with Matter (Gītā 13/21). But when he by breaking off his affinity with Matter, is established in the Supreme Bliss of the self, afflictions or sufferings can't have an access to him and so he is not shaken even by the heaviest affliction.

Link:–Now in the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa gives inspiration to gain that Supreme Bliss

तं विद्याद् दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् ।
स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा ॥ २३ ॥

taṁ vidyād duḥkhasaṁyogaviyogaṁ yogasaṁjñitam
sa niścayena yoktavyo yogo'nirviṇṇacetasā

This disconnection from assumed union with pain (travails of worldly

life) should be known by the name of Yoga. This Yoga of meditation (which aims at union with God or at equanimity) should be practised with determination and with an undistracted mind. 23

Comment:

'Taṁ vidyād duḥkhasaṁyogaviyogaṁ yogasaṁjñitam'— Our union with pain is the result of accepting our affinity with the world, this affinity is merely assumed not real. We can be disconnected from this union because it is merely assumed. It is not natural. However strong our assumption may be and it may be for a long time, we can cut it asunder as it is impermanent. As soon as we are disconnected from this union with pain (body and world) we attain Yoga i.e., we feel our union with the Self which is constant, eternal and spontaneous. But we forget this union because of accepting our affinity with the world. By breaking off this affinity our memory is regained. Therefore, Arjuna in the seventy-third verse of the eighteenth chapter says that he has regained his memory. It means that Arjuna has not gained anything new but he has regained his memory that he has his constant union with God (Self).

Here in this verse Lord Kṛṣṇa has defined Yoga as disconnection of union with pain while in 2/48 he has defined it as equanimity in pleasure and pain. In fact both the definitions are one and the same because equanimity in pleasure and pain turns into the state of disconnection from union with pain.

Patañjali has defined Yoga as the control of mind (Yogadarśana 1/2) and when the mind is controlled, one rests in the Self (1/3). But in the Gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa has defined Yoga as in this verse one's union with the self which is axiomatic.

The term 'Tam' (that) has been used for the state of the Yogī of disciplined mind. This state has been hinted at by the term 'Yatra' (where) in the first half of the twentieth verse of this chapter where it has been mentioned that the mind attains quietude, and the second half of the twentieth verse where it is mentioned that the Yogī gets established in the self. In the first line of the twenty-first verse He explained importance of the supreme bliss by using the term 'Yat' (which), while in the second line by using the term 'Yatra' (where) He explained the state of the Yogī. In the twenty-second verse He explained the gain by the term 'Yam' (which) and 'Yasmin' (in which). Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa by using the term 'Yat'* six times from the twentieth verse to the twenty-second verse has explained the singular state of the Yogī. The same state has been glorified here by the term 'Tam' (that).

'Sa niścayena yoktavyo yogo'—nirviṇṇacetasā'—This Yoga of meditation should be practised by a striver by having the aim of attaining Yoga (equanimity) with determination and with an undistracted mind, which has been described from the eighteenth verse to the twentieth verse of this chapter. In order to realize this state of equanimity a striver should have a determinate intellect that he has to attain this Yoga (equanimity) even in the face of all temptations and afflictions.

'Anirviṇṇacetasā' means that a striver should not feel despondent and distracted in attaining that Yoga in spite of obstacles and afflictions. He should think that he has to realize God or perfection or equanimity even if he has to spend years and birth together and even if he has to face the most terrific afflictions. He should think that he has wasted innumerable births and suffered tortures in hells but has not attained his aim of God-Realization though his sins have been destroyed. So now he should devote his full time (span of his life), power and resources to realize Him.

Link:—In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the topic of meditation on God Who is attributeless and formless in order to attain Yoga (equanimity).

* 'Yatra', 'Yam' and 'Yasmin' are the words formed from the word 'Yat'.

संकल्पप्रभवान्कामांस्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः ।
मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥ २४ ॥

saṅkalpaprabhavānkāmāṁstyaktvā sarvānaśeṣataḥ
manasaivendriyagrāmaṁ viniyamya samantataḥ

Completely giving up all desires arising from thoughts of the world, and fully restraining the senses from all sides by the mind. 24

Comment:

[The state which is attained by disinterested action (6/1–9), is attained by meditation on God with attributes and form (6/14–15) and by meditation on the self (6/18–23) is also attained by meditation on the Absolute Who is formless and attributeless which is described here.]

'Saṅkalpaprabhavānkāmāṁstyaktvā sarvānaśeṣataḥ'— The thought of worldly things, persons and incidents etc., comes to the mind and when the man is attached to it, it becomes a 'Saṅkalpa' (pursuit of the mind). This seed of pursuit sprouts and grows into the plant of desire because a man perceives the two sides—the favourable and the unfavourable, of the thought. Thus the desire born of thought should be completely abandoned.

The term 'Sarvān' (all) has been used with the term 'Kāmān' (desires) which is already plural to emphasize that all the desires of different kinds should be abandoned.

'Aśeṣataḥ' means that the seed of desires should be completely destroyed otherwise it may sprout and grow into a forest stretching for miles and miles.

'Manasaivendriyagrāmaṁ viniyamya samantataḥ'— The objects of five senses—sound, touch, colour, taste and smell should be fully restrained by the mind. 'Samantataḥ' means that the mind also should not think of the sensual pleasures and in the mind there should not be any temptation for worldly praise, honour and comfort etc., in the least. One who practises meditation should resolve to renounce affinity with all material objects.

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains what should be done in order to give up all desires and in order to restrain the senses.

शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।
आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किंचिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ २५ ॥

śanaiḥ śanairuparamedbuddhyā dhṛtigṛhītayā
ātmasaṁsthaṁ manaḥ kṛtvā na kiñcidapi cintayet

With his intellect (mind) set in firmness he should gradually attain tranquillity; with the mind fixed on God, he should not think of anything else. 25

Comment:

'Buddhyā dhṛtigṛhītayā'—A striver should not feel dejected and disappointed that he has not been successful in meditation on God after practising for a long time. He should have patience and determination that he has to attain God whatsoever may

happen* because there is no gain better than this. Thus he should control his intellect without caring for the worldly pleasures, praise, honour and comfort etc.

'Śanaiḥ śanairuparamed'— In being indifferent to the worldly pleasures he should not make haste but he should become indifferent gradually, and finally become quiet. He should have neither attachment nor aversion for the pursuits of the mind. Here attainment of quietude (tranquillity) has been mentioned because God, the sentient is beyond the access of mind, the evolute of Matter; which is insentient. As a lamp which receives light from the sun can't illumine the sun, so the mind which receives energy from God can't have an access to Him. Secondly, in the world there is nothing but affliction. Therefore, it is futile to think of the world. So he should become quiet tranquil and indifferent.

'Ātmasaṁsthaṁ manaḥ kṛtvā'— God pervades everywhere even in thoughts. So thoughts are nothing except God. Who is their base and illuminator. Secondly, God is eternal and always the same without any modification while persons, things and circumstances etc., are born and they decay viz., they have no existence. So concentrating the mind on God and having a firm determination of the existence of only God, he should think of nothing else but God.

'Na kiñcidapi cintayet'—It has already been said that he should not think of the world. God is all pervasive he should also not think so. By thinking so, his affinity with the mind will persist. The meditator and the mind will have their existence. So having resolved that God pervades everywhere he should not think of anything. Thus by becoming tranquil he will realize the self which is automatic and which has already been described in the twenty-second verse.

An Exceptional Fact in Connection With Meditation

The most important fact is that God (manifest or unmanifest) pervades everywhere— all persons, things, incidents, circumstances and actions and there is never any modification in Him while Matter always undergoes modifications. As a diver dives into the ocean and perceives water all around, similarly, a striver should feel God all around and also in him. The only aim of mankind is to realize God Who is ever realized but He is not felt because we divert our attention towards the perishable things.

If we have an exclusive devotion to attain Him, our mind will be automatically concentrated on Him. Ether is around us, but we don't pay attention to it, so is God. Therefore, a striver abandoning all thoughts of the world should be indifferent and quiet. He while concentrating his mind on God commits an error that he opposes the thought that comes to the mind and then has affinity with it. Similarly, he has affinity with a thought if he is attached to it. Therefore, a striver should neither oppose any thought nor support it, he should remain indifferent and attain tranquillity or quietude.

All the projections and distractions of the mind are transient, so if they are born, they will decay certainly. We should not accept our affinity for them. We should accept our affinity for God Who pervades everywhere. When we confine ourselves to a body, then our separate entity comes into existence that, 'I am'. This is in duality encompassed by God. Who is limitless, even, tranquil and also truth, knowledge and bliss as well as the illuminator of all things and actions. All objects and actions are illumined by one light. This light has relation either with all objects, actions and persons or with none. This light remains as it is. Similarly God as light has no relation with objects and actions etc.,

* He should have an iron determination that he will not leave his seat without realizing God even though his body may get parched and even his skin, flesh and bones may decay.

these objects and actions are transitory while the Lord is without origin. Being established in Him one should not think of my thing.

One 'Cintana' (thinking) is done while the other is automatic. We should not resort to it (thinking). If some thought crops us, we should remain natural. An ice-cube (block of ice) dropped into water is water. It is also surrounded by water. Similarly, all projections and distractions are within God and God is in them.

Moreover, when a striver meditates upon, the thoughts of past incidents etc., come to the mind, which have no existence then. But a striver by accepting their existence strengthens them. So he should remain indifferent to them without having attachment or aversion for them. They will perish in the same way as they are born. We have our constant affinity with God, we are His and He is ours. So a striver by accepting the fact that he is always established in Him, should sit quietly without thinking of anything. He should not accept his affinity with the thought which comes to his mind itself. By doing so the thought will perish and he will be fixed in God because he always remains fixed in Him.

The waves rise in the sea but in water there is neither sea nor waves. Similarly in God there is neither world nor thoughts. Only He pervades equally everywhere. The clouds appear and disappear in the sky but the sky remains the same. Similarly, while meditating, the thoughts come to the mind and slip away while God Who is everywhere remains the same. God is all-around, inside as well as outside: Everything sentient or insentient, animate or inanimate is God Himself. He is both at hand and faraway. He is incomprehensible because of His subtlety (Gītā 13/15). He is All Truth, All Knowledge and All Bliss. Everywhere there is Bliss, Bliss and only Bliss.

While discharging duties and performing actions we should accept that God is all-pervading and undivided. It will help us in meditating on God, while meditation on God will be helpful to us in our practical life, in remembering Him when we perform our duties. Therefore, a striver while meditating in seclusion or performing actions in the society should always accept that God pervades everywhere, all the time, all persons, things, incidents and actions etc. So we should always remain established in Him without thinking of anything else.

Link:–What course a striver should adopt, if he is unable to attain tranquillity is explained in the next verse.

यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम्।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत्॥ २६॥

yato , yato niścarati manaścañcalamasthiram
tatastato niyamyaitadātmanyeva *vaśaṁ nayet*

By whatever cause the restless and unsteady mind wanders away, he should restrain it from that and repeatedly cancentrate it on God.* 26

Comment:

'Yato yato niścarati manaś-cañcalamasthiram tatastato niyamyaitadātmanyeva vaśaṁ nayet'—The mind does not remain steady in the aim fixed by the striver. So it is called unsteady. It thinks of the worldly pleasures, and objects so it is called restless. It means that it neither is fixed on God nor renounces the world. Therefore, a striver should restrain it from the worldly objects and thoughts with discrimination and place safely at the feet of

* In the whole Gītā emphasis has been laid on practice only in this verse.

the Lord. He should be cautious in sub doing the fickle and unsteady mind. He should not be lax in it. It means that the striver should understand that the base and illuminator of those objects and thoughts is only God. This is concentration on God.

Devices to Concentrate the Mind on God

(i) The striver should restrain the mind when it is diverted to persons, things and circumstances etc., and concentrate it again and again on God.

(ii) All the beings and things in this universe are the manifestations of God. So he should understand that whatever thought comes to his mind, is nothing but God. Thus he should concentrate his mind on God.

(iii) Rubbish which was stored inside begins to come out at the time of meditation because when he was busy with other activities it could not get an outlet. By thinking so, a striver should not be perturbed. He should rather continue his efforts to concentrate his mind.

(iv) A striver can't meditate on God because he meditates on Him by accepting himself of the world, while really he is God's. Therefore, he should accept the reality, "I am only God's and only God is mine. I am not of the body and the world and the body and the world are not mine." By accepting this reality of his affinity for God, the mind will be concentrated on Him naturally.

(v) A striver should not leave any piece of work pending. He should either do the work first or remove its thought from his mind and then start meditation on God with a calm mind.

(vi) He should do away with all pursuits and distractions of the mind by offering them as oblation to the fire God.

(vii) He should wink several times and then shut the eyes. By winking, as the outward scene is cut off, so are the pursuits and distractions of the mind destroyed.

(viii) He should exhale air forcibly two or three times and then hold his breath as long as he can. Then he should start breathing slowly and come to the natural state of breathing. By doing so, pursuits and distractions of the mind disappear.

Link:—The result of concentration of mind on God is explained in the next two verses.

प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम्।
उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम्॥ २७॥

praśāntamanasaṁ hyenaṁ yoginaṁ sukhamuttamam
upaiti śāntarajasaṁ brahmabhūtamakalmaṣam

Sāttvika happiness verily comes to the Yogī whose mind is calm, whose passions are subdued, who is sinless. 27

Comment:

'Praśāntamanasaṁ hyenaṁ yoginaṁ sukhamuttamam upaiti śāntarajasaṁ brahmabhūtamakalmaṣam'—'Akalmaṣam' (sinless) is he who is free from Tamas (darkness attribute) dispositions such as obtuseness, inactivity, heedlessness and delusion (14/13).

'Śāntarajasam' (whose passions are subdued) is he whose Rajas (physical attribute) propensities (passions) of greed, activity, undertaking of actions with a selfish motive, restlessness and a thirst for enjoyments are subdued.

'Praśāntamanasam' (one of peaceful mind) is he whose mind becomes calm because he renounces all Tāmasika and Rājasika passions and is free from the mundane pursuits and distractions. Here the term 'Praśānta' means that the Yogī does not accept the mind as his own and so his

mind becomes free from attachment and aversion. Thus his mind becomes calm naturally.

'Enam (this) has been used for the Yogī who attains tranquillity as explained in the twenty-fifth verse. Such a Yogī attains the Sāttvika happiness.

In the second half of the twenty-third verse the Lord gave inspiraties to practise the Yoga of meditation with determination. He who practises this Yoga verily attains Sāttvika happiness. The term 'he' used here denotes this certanity.

'Sukhamupaiti'— It means that the Yogī has not to make efforts to attain that Supreme Bliss but it verily comes to him.

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः ।
सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥ २८ ॥

yuñjannevaṁ sadātmānaṁ yogī vigatakalmaṣaḥ
sukhena brahmasaṁsparśamatyantaṁ sukhamaśnute

The sinless Yogī thus, uniting his self constantly with God, easily enjoys the infinite bliss of oneness with Brahma (the Absolute). 28

Comment:

'Yuñjannevaṁ sadātmānaṁ yogī vigatakalmaṣaḥ'—Here the term 'Yuñjan'— does not mean to fix the mind on God through practice. It significies one's identity with God. This identification is not through mental pursuits. The Yogī constanly unites his self with God and thus becomes free from the feelings of egoism and mineness. This freedom from mineness and egoism means freedom from sins because affinity of egoism and mineness with the world is the root of sins.

The phrase 'Yuñjannevam' in the fifteenth verse has been used for the Lord with attributes while here it has been used for the Absolute viz., the Lord without attributes. Similarly, in the fifteenth verse emphasis has been laid to fix the mind on God through practice by the term 'Niyatamānasaḥ', while here by the expression 'Vigatakalmaṣaḥ' emphasis has been laid on renouncement of affinity with non-self. There the mind by meditating on God is absorbed in Him and thus the world is renounced while here by renouncing affinity with the world the Yogī gets established in God. Thus the result of both is the same.

'Sukhena brahmasaṁsparśa-matyantaṁ sukhamaśnute'—In unity with God the feeling of 'I' does not exist nor does there remain its least impression. Infinite bliss is the state in which the Yogī is immersed in God and loses his identity. The Yogī attains this bliss which has been named 'Imperishable Bliss' (5/21) and 'Supreme Bliss' (6/21) all these names denote the same Divine Bliss.

Link:–Now, in the next verse, Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the change of vision that takes place in the Yogī.

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।
ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥ २९ ॥

sarvabhūtasthamātmānaṁ sarvabhūtāni cātmani
īkṣate yogayuktātmā sarvatra samadarśanaḥ

The Yogī whose mind is harmonized by Yoga, looks on all with an equal eye, sees the self present, in all beings and all beings as assumed in the self. 29

Comment:

'Īkṣate yogayuktātmā sarvatra samadarśanaḥ'— The Yogī sees the same divinity in all. As sweetmeats in the shape of various birds, animals and men are made of the same stuff, sugar; various arms and weapons of iron; various toys of clay and various ornaments of gold, likewise it is the self that has assumed various forms in the universe. So a Yogī sees the self in all objects and beings.

'Yogayuktātmā'—It means that the mind of the Yogī by constant practice of meditation is absorbed in the self and then his affinity with the mind breaks off which has been hinted at by the expression, "Sarvabhūtasthamātmānaṁ sarvabhūtāni cātmani."

'Sarvabhūtasthmātmānam'— As a worldly person sees himself in all his limbs, a Yogī sees his self in all the creatures. As in a dream different persons, animals and objects are a man's own creation and they all disappear when he awakes, similarly a Yogī sees his own Self in all beings because there is no existence of the world like the creation of the dream, it is transient and kaleidoscopic. It means that whatever he sees is his Self.

'Sarvabhūtāni cātmani'—He sees all beings as assumed in the self. As different colours are born of light and are seen only in the light, and as different objects are born of the sun and are seen only in the light of the sun; so does a Yogī see that all beings are born of the self, merge in the self and are perceived as assumed ones in the self. It means that he sees the entire creation as manifestation of the self only.

In this verse it is mentioned that the Yogī sees the Self present in all beings but it is not mentioned that he sees all beings present in the Self. The reason is that the Self exists in all the creatures but the creatures don't have their existence in the Self, because they are born and they decay while the Self ever remains the same.

His dealing may differ with different creatures but he sees all with an equal eye because he sees the same divinity in all.

Link:–Lord Kṛṣṇa in the next verse explains how the devotee (Dhyānayogī) who was described in the fourteenth and fifteenth verses sees God everywhere.

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥ ३० ॥

yo māṁ paśyati sarvatra sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati
tasyāhaṁ na praṇaśyāmi sa ca me na praṇaśyati

He who sees Me (the universal Self) present in all beings, and sees all beings existing in Me, I am never out of sight of him, nor is he ever out of sight of Me. 30

Comment:

'Yo māṁ paśyati sarvatra'—The devotee sees Me in all persons, animals, birds, gods, demons, things, incidents and circumstances. When Brahmājī stole cowherds and calves, Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself assumed the form of cowherds and calves with their flutes, clothes and ornaments etc.* This drama of His manifestation continued for one year but no body could know it. One day Balarāma, the elder brother to Kṛṣṇa saw that the cows, leaving their young calves who were left at home, ran towards the big calves. Then by intuition he realized that Lord Kṛṣṇa had manifested Himself as those calves. Thus a devotee sees God pervading everywhere.

* Lord Kṛṣṇa assumed the forms of cowherds and cows, the same in number, the same bodies, the same limbs, the same sticks, the same horns, the same flutes, the same leaves, the same nets made of strings and the same ornaments. Their age, habits, nature, names, behaviour and states were all the same as those of original ones. At that time the voice of the Vedas that the whole world is the form of Lord Viṣṇu embodied itself (Śrīmadbhā. 10/13/19).

'Sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati'— He sees all beings existing in Me. As Lord Kṛṣṇa shows Arjuna His divine form, He asks him to behold the entire creation both animate and inanimate in His one limb (11/7). Arjuna also says,"O Lord, I behold in Your body all gods and multitude of different beings" (11/15). Sañjaya also says, "Arjuna then saw the whole universe with its many divisions in His body" (11/13). Thus a devotee sees the whole creation existing in Him.

'Tasyāhaṁ na praṇaśyāmi'—When a devotee sees the whole universe in Me, how can I be out of sight of him? I always remain within his sight.

'Sa ca me na praṇaśyati'—When a devotee sees God everywhere, God also sees him everywhere because Lord Kṛṣṇa declares,"Howsoever men approach Me, even so do I seek them (viz., carry out their desires)" (Gītā 4/11). It means that when a devotee identifies himself with God, God in His Universal Self sees him everywhere. Thus he is never out of His sight.

Now a question arises why Lord Kṛṣṇa says that the devotee only is never out of His sight when He declares, "I know the beings of the past, the present and the future" (7/26). The answer is that though no one is out of sight of the Lord, the Lord sees him everywhere, who sees the Lord everywhere. But for those who have a disinclination for God and are attached to the world, He is not manifest (Gītā 7/25). Because of his disinclination for Him he also remains out of His sight. Lord Kṛṣṇa declares in the twenty-nineth verse of the ninth chapter,"I am equally present in all beings; there is none hateful or dear to Me. But they who worship Me with devotion are in Me and I also am in them."

Link:–The relationship between the devotee and the Lord is further elucidated.

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥ ३१ ॥

sarvabhūtasthitaṁ yo māṁ bhajatyekatvamāsthitaḥ
sarvathā vartamāno'pi sa yogī mayi vartate

He who, established in unity, worships Me abiding in all beings though engaged in all forms of activities, dwells in Me. 31

Comment:

'Ekatvamāsthitaḥ'—In the previous verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explained that He is never out of sight of a devotee, nor is he ever out of sight of Him. Why? Because a devotee identifies himself with God. Who abides in all beings viz., he develops intense love for Him.

In non-dualistic principle the devotee has no identity of his own, his identity is merged in the Lord, while in dualistic principle the Lord and the devotee assume separate entities outwardly though inwardly they are one and the same* as a husband and a wife possessing two different bodies regard themselves as one and the same and two friends also deem themselves one and the same. Due to intense love duality does not remain. The devotee who worships God with whole hearted devotion gets established in communion with Him. This oneness and the sameness of the devotee and God is called 'Ekatvamāsthitaḥ.'

'Sarvabhūtasthitaṁ yo māṁ bhajati'—God pervades everywhere all the persons, things, incidents and circumstances etc., viz., all is God, He puts

* In the Discipline of Knowledge the devotee identifies himself with God and loses his identity, while in the Discipline of Devotion to exchange and enhance true (spiritual) love, the Lord and the devotee like Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Rādhājī, being one and the same become two.

on the appearance of the phenomena. (7/19)—this is worship to God.

'Sarvabhūtasthitam'— By this phrase it seems that God abides only in beings but actually it is not so, He abides in each and every particle of the universe. In ornaments made of gold there is nothing but gold. When the ornaments were not made, there was gold, now there is gold and there will remain gold even when the ornaments are broken or spoiled. But it does not mean that there is gold only in those ornaments, not anywhere else. Similarly, God existed before the creation of the world, He exists now and He will exist at the end of the creation. But to explain the fact that all beings are just like ornaments and God is like gold, it is said that only God abides in all beings and He also abides in all places.

'Sarvathā vartamāno'pi sa yogī mayi vartate'— He while discharging his duties according to the ordinance of the scriptures abides in Me because in his view there is no independent entity except Me.

In the thirteenth chapter in the context of the Discipline of Knowledge Lord Kṛṣṇa announced, "Even though engaged in all sorts of activities, he is not born again" (13/23); while here He says, "Though engaged in all sorts of activities, he dwells in Me." 'He is not born again' means that he is emancipated while 'He dwells in Me' means that the devotee, by becoming one with God, has a unique relish of spiritual love which is infinite and which ever enhances.

Here Lord Kṛṣṇa says that that devotee dwells in Him. Here a question arises whether other creatures don't dwell in Him. The answer is that all creatures dwell in Him but by attaching importance to the world they neither know nor accept that they dwell in Him. They by having egoism and mineness uphold this universe (Gītā 7/5). They don't regard the world as manifestation of God but regard it as a separate entity and attach importance to it by declaring 'We are worldly people,' while a devotee realizes that it is God Who manifests Himself as the multitudinous beings viz., all is God and so he always dwells in Him.

Link:—Now Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the merit of an enlightened Yogī (who believes in God Who is without form and attributes).

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ ३२ ॥

ātmaupamyena sarvatra samaṁ paśyati yo'rjuna
sukhaṁ vā yadi vā duḥkhaṁ sa yogī paramo mataḥ

That Yogī, O Arjuna, is regarded as the supreme, who looks on all as one, on the analogy of his own body and who looks at pleasure and pain of all with a similar eye. 32

Comment:

[What has been mentioned as 'Identified with Brahma (the Absolute)' or 'Attainment of Infinite Bliss' in the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth verses respectively, here in this verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the behaviour of such an enlightened Yogī towards others. "Such a Yogī is engrossed in promoting the welfare of all beings" (5/25, 12/4).]

'Ātmaupamyena sarvatra samaṁ paśyati yo'rjuna'— An ordinary person regards the injury of any of his limbs as his own, because according to him he and his limbs are one and the same. But a Yogī regards others as his own Self and thinks of their harm as his own harm. As one limb instead of hurting others, functions for their welfare, a Yogī thinks that he and other beings are limbs of God, so he works for the welfare of all.

'Sarvatra' (everywhere) means that he is engaged in promoting the welfare of all beings without any distinction of caste, creed and colour and does good even to animals, birds, trees and plants etc. By him efforts are

automatically made to alleviate their suffering.

He knows that limbs have different shapes and functions, yet he makes efforts to soothe the afflicted limbs equally. Hands can't be used as feet. If by chance a hand is touched to another hand, we don't wash it. But if it is touched to the foot, it is to be washed. When the organ of excretion is cleaned by the hand, we have to cleanse the hand by applying clay to it. Thus he observes touchability and untouchability with others also in accordance with the ordinance of the scriptures. But it does not mean that he hates them. He loves all of them and does good to them as he does towards his own limbs.

'Sukham vā yadi vā duḥkham'— To feel happy and sad on the analogy of his body does not mean that if a person is injured, this enlightened soul feels that injury in his body. If it is taken as such, the affliction of the enlightened soul will be enormous because the world is full of afflicted persons. It means that as an ordinary and ignorant person attached to his body makes efforts to relieve bodily pain promptly, an enlightened soul does the same to others; and as the ignorant man is not proud of such type of actions performed for his body, the enlightened one is not proud of performing them for others. He is naturally engrossed in the welfare of others. Moreover, the enlightened soul can bear his bodily pain and he remains indifferent to it but he can't bear the pain of others and so always remains prepared to relieve their suffering because he thinks that he has the power to bear the pain as he knows that he himself is different from the body while the other ignorant people have no power to bear the pain as they identify themselves with their bodies. Indra, the king of the gods beheaded sage Dadhīci—though the latter had caused no offence to the former. Dadhīci was brought to life by Aśvinī Kumāras, the twin sons of the sun who are supposed to be the physicians of the gods. But when Indra demanded bones of Dadhīci to make a thunder bolt, Dadhīci offered him his bones by abandoning his body.

Here a question arises that an enlightened soul is prepared to remove the pain of others while he shows indifference to his own bodily pain, it means that he lacks equanimity. The answer is that this attitude is superior to equanimity because it becomes his nature without having the least unevenness of mind.

'Sa yogī paramo mataḥ'— That Yogī is regarded as the supreme because he sees nothing but God pervading everywhere all the time and remains established in Him.

An Exceptional Fact

(i) Here for the Yogī of meditation it has been said, "He looks on all as one, on the analogy of his own self." For a Yogī of Discipline of Action, it has been said, "He identifies his self with the self of all beings" (5/7). For a Yogī of the Discipline of Knowledge, it has been said "He is engaged in promoting the welfare of all" (5/25, 12/4). But in the Discipline of Devotion a devotee sees the Lord (the universal self) present in all beings (6/30) and he worships Him through the performance of his own duty (18/46). It means that the striver following the Discipline of Action as well as Knowledge should see his own self in all beings while a striver following the Discipline of Devotion should see the Lord, his Deity present in all beings.

(ii) The feeling of brotherhood is excellent. But when self interest comes in, as in the case of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, this feeling of brotherhood changes into enmity. But he who looks on all alike on the analogy of his own self, can't have feelings of enmity for any one. For example no one gets angry with the teeth or pulls them out if they accidently happen to bite the tongue or the lips. Similarly an enlightened Yogī has no enmity for any one, he takes joys and sorrows of others as his own. Superior to this feeling is the feeling that God is present in all beings. Thus a devotee sees his favourite Lord everywhere. So Lord Kṛṣṇa declares him to be superior to others. He says, "He is considered by Me to be the best Yogī" (6/47), "I consider them to be the best Yogīs" (12/2), "Those devotees are extremely dear to Me" (12/20) and so on.

Link:–Lord Kṛṣṇa explained the Discipline of Meditation as the means to attain equanimity from the tenth verse to the thirty-second verse. A doubt rises in Arjuna's mind and he puts it before Lord Kṛṣṇa in the next two verses.

अर्जुन उवाच

योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन ।
एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात्स्थितिं स्थिराम् ॥ ३३ ॥

arjuna uvāca

yo'yaṁ yogastvayā proktaḥ sāmyena madhusūdana
etasyāhaṁ na paśyāmi cañcalatvātsthitiṁ sthirām

Arjuna said:

O Kṛṣṇa, this Yoga of equanimity has been taught by You but I do not perceive any stability for it owing to restlessness of mind. 33

Comment:

[Lord Kṛṣṇa in the gospel of the Gītā has laid great emphasis on equanimity in success and failure etc. This equanimity leads a man to salvation. Arjuna was afraid of sins by waging the war. So Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorted him, "Treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, engage yourself in the battle. Thus you will incur no sin" (2/38). In this world people incur so many sins but we are not held responsible for them because we are equanimous. Similarly, while performing actions and discharging our duty, if we remain equanimous, those actions don't mislead us to bondage. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa in the beginning of this chapter said, "He who discharges his duty without expecting the fruit of actions is a Saṁnyāsī and a Yogī." The result of renouncing the fruit of actions is equanimity. Lord Kṛṣṇa described the Discipline of Meditation as the means of attaining equanimity, from the tenth to the thirty-second verses. Keeping this equanimity in mind Arjuna puts his doubt before Lord Kṛṣṇa].

'Yo' yaṁ yogastvayā proktaḥ sāmyena madhusūdana'— Here the doubt which Arjuna puts before Lord Kṛṣṇa is not about the thirty-second verse but about meditation because in the thirty-second verse there is description of an enlightened soul who is always equanimous. Therefore, here the word 'Yaḥ' (which) denotes Yoga (equanimity) and 'Ayam' (this) denotes meditation described from the tenth verse to the twenty-eighth verse.

'Etasyāhaṁ na paśyāmi cañcalatvātsthitiṁ sthirām'— Here Arjuna seems to mean that equanimity can be easily attained by the Discipline of Action but it is difficult by the Discipline of Meditation owing to the restlessness of mind.

It means that a striver cannot concentrate his mind on God so long as the mind is restless, and without concentration of mind equanimity can't be attained.

Link:–In the next verse Arjuna describes the restless nature of mind with the help of an illustration.

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम् ।
तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥ ३४ ॥

cañcalaṁ hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa pramāthi balavaddṛḍham
tasyā'haṁ nigrahaṁ manye vāyoriva suduṣkaram

The mind verily is, O Kṛṣṇa, restless, turbulent, strong and obstinate; therefore, I consider it as difficult to control as the wind. 34

Comment:

'Cañcalaṁ hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa pramāthi balavaddṛḍham'— Arjuna addresses the Lord as Kṛṣṇa because He has the power of attraction. So He should attract his mind and concentrate it on Him because it is very difficult for him to control it as it is unsteady and restless. Besides being restless, it is turbulent, it distracts the striver from the right course. Moreover, it is obstinate and strong.

According to Lord Kṛṣṇa "Desire has five seats—the senses, mind, intellect, sense-objects and self" (Gītā 3/40, 3/34, 2/59). Actually Desire (Kāma) resides in the embodied Self but it seems to reside in senses, mind and intellect etc. By the time it is destroyed from the self, it appears in the senses and mind etc., from time to time. But when it is destroyed from the self, it doesn't appear anywhere. This proves that so long as this desire subsists in the self, the mind torments the striver. Therefore the mind has been called turbulent. Similarly the senses torment the mind of the striver. So they have been called turbulent in the sixtieth verse of the second chapter. It means that when the desire appears in the mind and senses, it torments the striver and does not allow him to remain established in the self.

The mind is attracted towards objects etc., and does not abandon them in anyway. So it is called obstinate. This obstinacy of the mind is very strong. So the mind is called strong. It forcibly distracts a striver from his course and misleads him to sensual pleasures. So it has been mentioned in the scriptures, "The mind leads a man to emancipation and bondage." But the mind remains turbulent, obstinate and strong so long as Desire occupies a seat in the self. When the striver himself becomes free from desires, the objects and senses don't affect him at all, and the turbulence, obstinacy and strength of the mind perish.

Restlessness of the mind is an obstacle so long as Desire resides in the self. But when Desire is rooted out, it is not an obstacle in the least. It is mentioned in the scriptures—

"When the feeling of egoism ('I'ness with Matter) is rooted out and one realizes God, one's mind perceives God everywhere viz., one attains constant trance (Natural trance)."

'Tasyā'haṁ nigrahaṁ manye vāyoriva suduṣkaram'—It is difficult to control this restless, turbulent, strong and obstinate mind. As one can't catch hold of wind in the same way mind can't be controlled easily, it is difficult to control it.

Link:–Now in the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa by supporting Arjuna's statement explains the way of culturing the mind.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम्।
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते॥ ३५॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

asaṁśayaṁ mahābāho mano durnigrahaṁ calam
abhyāsena tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca gṛhyate

The Blessed Lord said:

Doubtless, O mighty-armed, the mind is restless and hard to control; but by practice and dispassion, O son of Kuntī, it can be controlled. 35

Comment:

'Asaṁśayaṁ mahābāho mano durnigrahaṁ calam'—Lord Kṛṣṇa addresses him as 'Mahābāho' viz., mighty-

armed to tell him that he is brave, so he should maintain patience and courage and should not lose heart. Moreover, He supports his statement that undoubtedly mind is restless and hard to control.

'Abhyāsena tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca gṛhyate'— Arjuna's mother, Kuntī possessed discrimination and dispassion. She demanded the boon of adversity from Lord Kṛṣṇa*. Such cases are rare in history. So Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to remind Arjuna that he is the son of such a dispassionate mother. So being dispassionate he should concentrate his mind on God.

An earnest regular and persistent attempt to concentrate the mind on God is called practice. This practice should be done with respect and adoration for God by attaching importance to Him. This practice is of two kinds:—

(i) The striver should concentrate the mind on the target, being indifferent to the thoughts that come to the mind.

(ii) The striver should behold his Deity wherever the mind wanders.

There are some other means also of concentrating the mind on God.

(1) The striver should exhale air two or three times and then think that he has turned out the world of his mind and so whatever thought will come to the mind will be a manifestation of God only—this is 'Vāsudevaḥ sarvam'.

(2) Recite the name of the Lord and listen to it. There should not be any time lag between the recitation of one name and the next one.

(3) Recite the name and count its number with the mind without using fingers or a rosary of beads.

(4) Recite one name of the Lord as 'Rāma' (with the tongue) and remember another name as 'Kṛṣṇa' (with the mind).

(5) Chant the name with the mind.

(6) Think of the Form of the Lord from top to toe and from toe to top.

(7) Think that the Lord is standing before you. Think of His Form. Write down mentally on His toes five names, on the lower part of the leg three names, a bit above it two names, a bit above it three names, below and above the knee one name each, on the thigh three names, on the right hand side of the waist two names, on the rib three names, on the shoulder two names, on the upper part of the arm three names, above and below the elbow two names in the form of a ring, below the elbow three names, on the palm two names in the form of a ring, on the five fingers five names, round the throat four names as half of the garland, in the ear two names as an ear ring, on the right hand side of the crown six names by making three rings.

Thus by writing fifty-four names on the right hand side and fifty-four names on the left hand side we think of all the limbs of the Lord and count the hundred and eight beads of a rosary. We can do so once or twice a day.

Thus there are different methods of concentrating the mind on God. A striver can also think of such means himself.

This practice of concentration needs dispassion because the more dispassionate a man is, the easier it will be for him to concentrate his mind on God. If he has no attachment for the world, he will not think of the world. If a thought because of the past influences, comes to his mind, he should become indifferent to it without having any attachment or aversion. By doing so the thought perishes. Thus by practice and dispassion, mind can be controlled.

The Methods to Develop Dispassion

1. The world is kaleidoscopic while the self never changes in the least. We can't live with the world and the world can't live with us. Our babyhood, boyhood and youth have passed. Similar is the case with circumstances. By thinking of the reality we can become dispassionate.

2. We should satisfy the just desires of our family and relations according to our power, ability and resources without hope of reward. Thus old attachment is wiped out and new attachment is not born.

3. We should think that all the sins, crimes and pains are the fruits of attachment while peace and bliss are the fruits of dispassion. By thinking so we can develop dispassion.

* O preceptor of the world, grant us adversity so that we may have your rare vision which may enable us not to be reborn. (Śrīmadbhā. 1/8/25)

Link:–Now in the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains for whom this Yoga of meditation is possible and for whom else it is not possible.

असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः ।
वश्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽवाप्तुमुपायतः ॥ ३६ ॥

asaṁyatātmanā yogo duṣprāpa iti me matiḥ
vaśyātmanā tu yatatā śakyo'vāptumupāyataḥ

Yoga is hard to attain for one whose mind is not subdued but it can be attained by him who has controlled his mind and who strives ceaselessly; such is My conviction. 36

Comment:

'Asaṁyatātmanā yogo duṣprāpa'— It is my opinion that Yoga is hard to attain for one whose mind is not subdued because restlessness of mind is not such a big obstacle to attain Yoga as is the uncontrolled mind. Like a chaste wife, a striver should control his mind. By controlling the mind, a striver can concentrate it on God.

Generally strivers have a tendency to be engaged in spiritual discipline with faith but they don't make persistent efforts, with the result that their mind and senses are not controlled and thus Yoga is difficult to attain viz., All-Pervading God is not easily attained.

The strivers have no disinclination for pleasures as they have for the forbidden food such as meat etc. Eating forbidden food causes degradation but enjoyment of sense-objects with attachment causes much more degradation. In eating meat strivers have this notion that this is a prohibited item but while enjoying sense-objects they don't have this notion. The worldly pleasures leave their influence which continues for ages and which induce them to incur sins. Due to this inclination for pleasures they are unable to control their mind and senses and so they find it difficult to attain Yoga.

'Vaśyātmanā tu yatatā śakyo'vāptumupāyataḥ'—Yoga can be attained by him who has controlled his mind and who strives ceaselessly viz., who is regulated in diet and recreation, sleep and wakefulness— such is My conviction.

The striver who wants to control his mind should understand that he is a devotee and a striver, not a voluptuary, he is God's and so he should take refuge in Him; he is a seeker for knowledge and so he should obtain it; he is a servant and so he has to serve others without having any desire. Thus if the striver changes his ego, ('I'ness) the mind can be easily and quickly controlled.

When the mind is purified, it is controlled spontaneously. Attachment of the mind for the perishable is its impurity. When the striver has an exclusive aim of God-Realization, his attachment is renounced and his mind becomes pure.

A striver should always be careful, he should never have a claim on others' things etc., because by laying such a claim on them, his mind becomes impure. In business or service or transaction he should never adopt foul means, he should never try to take the share of others but he should give a part of his share to them. By doing so his mind is purified.

A Vital Fact

In the Discipline of Meditation Arjuna said, "The mind is restless, therefore, I consider it as difficult to control as the wind." In response to this problem Lord Kṛṣṇa gave the solution by saying,"It can be controlled by practice and dispassion." Out of these two, for meditation, practice is more significant (Gītā 6/26) while in the Discipline of Knowledge, dispassion is more important. Though dispassion is helpful in the Discipline of Meditation, yet in this discipline, mind can be controlled even when attachment persists. According to the

philosophy of Patañjali, mind can be controlled by practice. If dispassion is the cause of concentration, how can one gain accomplishments or worldly fruits by the concentration of mind ? But when the aim is to realize God, concentration of the mind and trance are helpful in God-Realization.

The next stage after the concentration of the mind is trance. There is a deviation from the state of trance also. It means that in that state there is affinity for Matter. When this affinity breaks off, a striver realizes his Self from where there is no deviation. Lord Kṛṣṇa in the gospel of the Gītā did not talk much about the concentration of the mind because it was not His aim. Concentration of the mind according to Him is only a means to achieve an end either the mundane or the spiritual, while attachment for the world is the main obstacle to God-Realization. Therefore, a striver should renounce his affinity for Matter. First a striver may have attraction for trance but when he attains that state of trance, he has no attraction for it, he becomes indifferent to it. As soon as he becomes indifferent to it, he gets established in the self which is called attainment of Yoga. This unity is constant and eternal.

Link:–In the preceding verse Lord Kṛṣṇa said that Yoga is hard to attain for one whose mind is not subdued and who does not strive ceaselessly. So Arjuna in the next two verses puts question about the fate of such an imperfect Yogī.

अर्जुन उवाच

अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः ।
अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति ॥ ३७ ॥

arjuna uvāca

ayatiḥ śraddhayopeto yogāccalitamānasaḥ
aprāpya yogasaṁsiddhiṁ kāṁ gatiṁ kṛṣṇa gacchati

Arjuna said:

O Kṛṣṇa, he who, though possessed of faith, is unable to subdue his passions and whose mind deviates from Yoga, having failed to attain perfection in Yoga, what end does he meet with? 37

Comment:

'Ayatiḥ śraddhayopeto yogāccalitamānasaḥ'—He is imbued with the faith that Yoga leads to perfection. So he performs adoration and meditation with devotion and faith. But he does not strive ceaselessly because he has not subdued his passions and controlled his mind. He, thinking of the sensual pleasures because of attachment for them, has not been able to attain the goal of Yoga. What happens to such a striver at the time of death?

'Aprāpya yogasaṁsiddhiṁ kāṁ gatiṁ kṛṣṇa gacchati'—What fate will the striver meet with, whose mind has deviated from Yoga and who has not realized God ?

It means that he did not incur sins, so he can't go to hells. He can't go to heaven because he has no desire for heaven. He can't be reborn, because he performed adoration and meditation with interest and faith. But at the time of death other thought comes to his mind and so he cannot think of God. What will happen to him?

By addressing the Lord as Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna means to say that He attracts all the creatures and is the controller of their destiny. Therefore, he asks Him in which direction he will attract him and what fate he will meet with.

कच्चिन्नोभयविभ्रष्टश्छिन्नाभ्रमिव नश्यति ।
अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि ॥ ३८ ॥

kaccinnobhayavibhraṣṭaśchinnābhramiva naśyati
apratiṣṭho mahābāho vimūḍho brahmaṇaḥ pathi

O mighty-armed, deluded in the path of God, without any hold, does he not perish like a rent cloud, deprived of both God-Realization and worldly enjoyment? 38

Comment:

[Arjuna seeks clarification about the fate of the striver who has failed to attain perfection in Yoga].

'Apratiṣṭho mahābāho vimūḍho brahmaṇaḥ pathi'—He renounces the desire for worldly pleasures, honour and praise etc., and follows the spiritual discipline. But he is not able to realize God and at the time of death deviates from Yoga viz., does not think of God.

'Kaccinnobhayavibhraṣṭaśchinnābhramiva naśyati'— Does he not perish like a rent cloud deprived of both God-Realization and worldly enjoyments? A rent cloud does not descend on earth as rain and this drift of cloud is separated from the main body and can't join the other ones. What is the fate of a striver who renounces his dependence on the world but at the same time fails to realize God? Does he meet with damnation?

Here the illustration of a cloud is not quite apt because the fragment of a cloud and the main body of a cloud and the cloud to which it was going to join—all the three belong to the same class, they are Matter. But in the case of a striver, the world is Matter (Insentient) while he himself and God are sentient. Thus they don't belong to the same class.

In this verse Arjuna means to say that the soul being a fragment of God is imperishable. If it had had the aim to attain heaven, it might have gone to heaven or hell or the other lower births of beasts and birds but still would have remained in the world. What is the fate of a striver who has renounced dependence on the world with the aim of attaining God but could not realize the same and at the time of death could not think of God?

An Exceptional Fact

A striver can't have a downfall if he has attained God-Realization. Here the illustration of a cloud that a fragment of a cloud is separated from the main cloud and does not join the other cloud and is scattered in between the two, is not apt, because a striver who has not yet realized God can't be said to have fallen from God-Realization. Moreover once God-Realization is attained, there is no question of being detached from it. Thus if a person fails to think of God at the last moment, he may be said to have failed in attaining God but he can't be said to have failed in both i.e., the world and God-Realization. Arjuna has also dwelt upon the same point in the thirty-seventh verse. Thus a striver can deviate from Yoga only if he has not realized God. After God-Realization there is no question of deviation or downfall from Yoga.

Link:–In the next verse Arjuna prays to Lord Kṛṣṇa to dispel his doubt expressed in the previous verse.

एतन्मे संशयं कृष्ण छेत्तुमर्हस्यशेषतः ।
त्वदन्यः संशयस्यास्य छेत्ता न ह्युपपद्यते ॥ ३९ ॥

etanme saṁśayaṁ kṛṣṇa chettumarhasyaśeṣataḥ
tvadanyaḥ saṁśayasyāsya chettā na hyupapadyate

O Kṛṣṇa, it behoves You to dispel this doubt of mine completely; for none other than Yourself can clear this doubt. 39

Comment:

'Etanme saṁśayaṁ kṛṣṇa chettumarhasyaśeṣataḥ'—The striver having the aim of God-Realization becomes free from sins and so can't go to hells. He can't go to heaven because he has no such aim. He can't be reborn as a man, because this is also not the aim of his life. He deviates from the path of God-Realization. Does such a striver not perish like a rent cloud ?

'Tvadanyaḥ saṁśayasyāsya chettā na hyupapadyate'—No one can dispel this doubt completely. A puzzle of the scriptures can be solved by scholars possessing knowledge. A Yogī who has attained this state by practice can know the solution to a certain extent. But You are omniscient, You know the fate and end of all creatures*. So You can dispel this doubt of mine completely.

Link:—In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa clears the doubt raised by Arjuna.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते।
न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिद्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥ ४० ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

pārtha naiveha nāmutra vināśastasya vidyate
na hi kalyāṇakṛtkaściddurgatiṁ tāta gacchati

The Blessed Lord said:

O Pārtha, there is no fall for him either here or hereafter; for none who works for self-redemption meets with an evil destiny. 40

Comment:

[Arjuna is very much anxious to know the end of the striver who has failed to attain perfection in Yoga. Lord Kṛṣṇa knows Arjuna's anxiety and so He removes it .]

'Pārtha naiveha nāmutra vināśastasya vidyate'— O son of Pṛthā, the striver who deviates from Yoga never falls (Gītā 6/41–45). It means that he does not go to a state inferior to what he has already attained. His spiritual practice and aim go with him to his next birth and he will not take birth again and again.

Sage Bharata by renouncing his kingdom observed penance in seclusion. There, out of pity he was attached to a young deer, with the result that he had to get birth as a deer. But he did not fall to a state inferior to what he had already attained even in the life of a deer. In that life also it remembered its past. (Śrīmadbhāgavata Section V, Chapters VII, VIII). Similarly, one who practises Yoga but fails to attain perfection, may get birth even as an animal but does not fall to a state inferior to what he has already attained because he regains the spiritual propensities stored up in the previous birth. This draws him towards God. I myself have observed a dog sitting with devotees listening to the religious discourses and moving about with a group of devotees who were chanting the Lord's name loudly.

'Na hi kalyāṇakṛtkaściddurgatiṁ tāta gacchati'— Here 'Tāta', a word of endearment has been used. In the whole Gītā this word has been used only once. It shows Lord Kṛṣṇa's great affection and grace for Arjuna. Here the pronouncement of the Lord is a great assurance for all strivers, "The doer of good never comes to grief" or 'One who works for self redemption never meets with an evil

* Bhagavān (God) is He Who knows about birth and death, good-fate and ill-fate, knowledge and ignorance of all creatures. (Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6/5/78; Nārada Purāṇa, Pūrva. 46/21)

destiny.' It means that the striver who, without being attached to pleasures and prosperity, is engaged in spiritual discipline to attain God-Realization, has no fall because He is his saviour.

One who is engrossed in the welfare of all creatures and thinks of God-Realization, is the most loving to Him because he is His fragment. So he has his real affinity for Him. How can he meet with ill fate? Sometimes it may seem that he has fallen to a state inferior to what he had already attained. But it so happens because of his pride. The Lord gives him a warning so that he may be aware of his state and turn towards Him again with zeal. Lord Kṛṣṇa disappeared during His drama (pastime) of human life from the midst of the Gopīs. At that time they were very much perturbed and were at their wits end. Then He again reappeared and said to them that He had disappeared adoring them (Śrīmadbhā. 10/32/21). Their welfare and memory were lingering in Him. When a person is inclined towards Him, he is most loving to Him because he had lost his way but is again following the right way. God, like the mother, always promotes the welfare of a devotee.

It means that impressions of spirituality once germinated can't be wiped out because whatever is done for God becomes Real (Gītā 17/27) viz., the real never ceases to be (Gītā 2/16). Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa here says that one who works for self-redemption never meets with an evil destiny, because the impressions of the past always inspire him towards spirituality. Even if he goes to the lower births, his nature will be superior to that of other members of his class.*

Though Arjuna puts the question, "What end does a striver meet at the time of death?" yet Lord Kṛṣṇa answers that there is no fall for him here or hereafter. Now a question arises why Ajāmila and Bilvamaṅgala were overpowered by prostitutes and why there was a fall for them. The answer is that the people thought that they had a fall but actually it was not so. After leaving the body Ajāmila was escorted by the courtiers of the Lord; and Bilvamaṅgala became a devotee of God. A devotee, following the spiritual discipline, may be degraded sometimes because of his carelessness. But he never falls to a state inferior to what he has already attained. If he happens to have association with the good or indulges in misfortune, he again starts following the spiritual path speedily†. But delay in God-Realization is indeed a kind of downfall for him. Bad company etc., are decidedly obstacles for a striver to spiritual progress. So he should always beware of bad company and should never be overpowered by sensual pleasures and lust etc.

Link:–In the previous verse Lord Kṛṣṇa assured Arjuna that there is no fall for a striver either here or hereafter and he never meets with an evil destiny. Now Lord Kṛṣṇa in the next verse answers the question put by Arjuna in the thirty-seventh verse about the striver who has failed to attain perfection in Yoga.

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।
शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ॥ ४१ ॥

prāpya puṇyakṛtāṁ lokānuṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ
śucīnāṁ śrīmatāṁ gehe yogabhraṣṭo'bhijāyate

Having attained to the world of the righteous and having lived there for countless years, he who falls from Yoga, is reborn in the house of the pious and prosperous. 41

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* One whose nature has been good can't take birth as a harmful poisonous creature such as a snake or a scorpion etc.

† If such a person by accident falls into bad company, he does not abandon his virtues as a snake does not abandon the jewel which exists in its head (Mānasa 1/3/5).

Comment:

'Prāpya puṇyakṛtām lokān'—Those people, who perform oblation etc., in accordance with the ordinance of the scriptures, attain the worlds of the righteous viz., heaven. It means that the righteous, not the sinners attain heaven. But the strivers who have no desire to reap the fruit of their virtuous actions attain heaven without much effort, while the people who perform oblation attain heaven by making efforts. Moreover, in heaven also their subtle lust lingers because their aim is to enjoy pleasures. Those who at the time of death deviate from Yoga attain heaven but they become indifferent to the pleasures because their aim is not to enjoy pleasures They have to go to heaven because of their subtle desire which is an obstacle to God-Realization.

'Uṣitvā śāśvatīḥ' samāḥ'—Heaven is attained both by those who perform penances and actions with some interested motive and also by those whose aim is to realize God but who deviate from Yoga. But there is a vast difference between the two. The former having enjoyed the heavenly pleasures return to this world of mortals on the exhaustion of their merits and thus they can stay there for a limited period only, while the latter can stay for unlimited period because their aim has been God-Realization; but because of having a latent desire they go to heaven and can stay there for the duration in proportion to the store of their meritorious deeds, but they can't be entangled in the pleasures there. The reason is when even the seeker of the Yoga transcends the fruit of actions (6/44), how can one who has deviated from Yoga get entangled ?

'Śucīnām śrīmatām gehe yogabhraṣṭo'bhijāyate'—The devotee who has deviated from Yoga after enjoying the celestial pleasures ceases to have any taste in them and is reborn in the house of the pure and prosperous as a result of his sacred and spiritual pursuits. There he, though subject to the senses, feels drawn towards God by force of his prenatal habit (6/44).

The pious and prosperous are those who earn their livelihood by honest means, who never have a claim on other's things, whose conduct and feelings are pure, who don't attach importance to worldly pleasures and who regard all the resources as the means to attain God while those who regard themselves as master of the riches and lay claim to them are not indeed pious and prosperous but are their slaves.

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa of His own accord describes the destiny of other strivers who fall from Yoga.

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम्।
एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम्॥ ४२॥

athavā yogināmeva kule bhavati dhīmatām
etaddhi durlabhataraṁ loke janma yadīdṛśam

Or (if he has developed dispassion) he is born in a family of enlightened Yogīs; but this kind of birth is very difficult to obtain in this world. 42

Comment:

[There are two kinds of strivers — Having subtle desires and without such desires. The striver whose aim is to realize God and is interested in spirituality but his desires have not been wiped out completely after living for countless years in heaven, is reborn in the house of the pious and prosperous. This type of striver has already been described in the previous verse. Now in this verse there is the description of the striver who is free from desire, has developed dispassion, has the only aim of God-Realization and practises Yoga but has not attained perfection and

deviated from Yoga. Such a striver, instead of going to heaven, directly takes birth in a family of enlightened Yogīs.]

'Athavā'— I have answered your question about the striver who deviates from Yoga at the time of death. Now I want to tell you about the dispassionate striver who has disinclination for the world and is interested in spiritual perfection but at the time of death deviates from Yoga.

'Yoginām eva kule bhavati dhīmatām'—The dispassionate striver is born in the family of the enlightened Yogīs who have realized God and are fixed in Him because it is mentioned in the scriptures that only the enlightened souls are born in the family of the enlightened Yogīs (Mundaka. 3/2/9).

'Etaddhi durlabhataram loke janma yadīdṛśam'— Such a birth is very difficult to obtain in this world. In the family of the enlightened Yogīs the strivers get the favourable environment which draws out the latent Yoga element in them and leads them rapidly towards their goal.

An Exceptional Fact

In the verse 'Etat' means that the striver is born in the family of the enlightened Yogīs while 'Īdṛśam' means that he has got a chance to have company of the enlightened Yogīs. In the world there are two kinds of people 'Binduja' and 'Nādaja'. Those who are born of ovum and sperm of parents are called 'Binduja' while those who start following the spiritual path by the speech (preaching) of great souls are 'Nādaja'. Here he who is born in the family of enlightened Yogīs after falling from Yoga is 'Binduja' while the striver who gets an opportunity to have the company of liberated souls is 'Nādaja'.

In the scriptures it is mentioned that it is difficult to obtain human life but it is even more difficult to have company of the great souls. Nāradajī has also written in his book 'Bhaktisūtra' that the company of the great souls is very difficult, inaccessible and infallible. The reason is that the great souls are very rare, and if by God's grace one gets their company*, it is difficult to recognise them. But the company of the great souls never goes in vain.

Link:–In the above verse Lord Kṛṣṇa described that a dispassionate striver takes birth in the family of enlightened Yogīs. In the next verse He explains what happens to him after his birth there.

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदेहिकम्।
यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन॥ ४३॥

tatra tam buddhisaṁyogaṁ labhate paurvadehikam
yatate ca tato bhūyaḥ saṁsiddhau kurunandana

There he regains the knowledge of the previous birth and he strives more than before for perfection, O joy of the Kurus. 43

Comment:

'Tatra tam buddhisaṁyogam labhate paurvadehikam'— The term 'Tatra' (there) has been used to describe the condition of the dispassionate striver after his birth in the family of the enlightened souls.

'Paurvadehikam'— (Acquired in the former body) and 'Buddhisaṁyogam' (union with knowledge) phrases mean that the dispassionate striver does not go to heaven but is born in a family of enlightened Yogīs where he regains the knowledge of the previous birth and is naturally drawn towards God because of the impressions and latencies of the

* One gets company of great souls when the heart of Lord Rāghava Who is merciful to the poor, melts with pity (Vinaya Patrikā 136/10).

previous birth and continues to practise Yoga. A traveller while travelling on foot feels tired and sleeps on one side of the foot path. But when he awakes he has not to cover the distance which he has already covered. Similarly the striver regains the knowledge of the previous birth. He is like a student who goes through the old lessons and grasps them immediately. Thus the favourable impressions of the previous birth are aroused in him.

'Yatate ca tato bhūyaḥ saṁsiddhau'— In the favourable surroundings the striver strives more than before for perfection.

If we interpret it that both kinds of strivers, who deviate from Yoga, go to heaven and out of them the one who has lust for pleasures is born in the house of the pious and prosperous, while the other who has no lust is born in a family of enlightened Yogīs, will it make any difference ? Yes, it will. We can't call the striver 'Paurvadehika' (of the former body) if he is reborn after going to heaven, because the duration of his stay in heaven will come in between the two births. Moreover, in heaven he can't have union with knowledge because there is abundance of pleasures in heaven.

There is one more point which needs attention. A striver having lust goes to heaven. But why should a striver who is free from passions and lust, go to heaven? It is a kind of punishment to send such a striver to heaven, which is fully unjustified.

Link:–In the previous verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explained that the striver who is born in a family of enlightened Yogīs regains the knowledge of the previous birth and strives more than before for perfection. Now he describes the striver who deviates from Yoga and is born in the house of the pious and prosperous.

पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव ह्रियते ह्यवशोऽपि सः ।
जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते ॥ ४४ ॥

pūrvābhyāsena tenaiva hriyate hyavaśo'pi saḥ
jijñāsurapi yogasya śabdabrahmātivartate

The one who takes birth in the house of the prosperous, though subject to the senses, feels drawn towards God by force of the former practice; because the seeker of the Yoga of equanimity also transcends the fruit of actions performed with some motive as laid down in the Vedas. 44

Comment:

'Pūrvābhyāsena tenaiva hriyate hyavaśo'pi saḥ'— The striver who is born in the house of the pious and prosperous does not get such a favourable environment and company as the one who is born in the house of the enlightened Yogīs, yet because of sacred and spiritual propensity stored up in the previous birth, he is drawn towards God in spite of his attachment to pleasures.

'Avaśo'pi' means that though he has lived in heaven for countless years and enjoyed pleasures there, and in the house of the prosperous also there are pleasures in abundance, he is overpowered by his senses. In spite of all this he is drawn towards God by force of the former practice of the previous births. The reason is that the lust for pleasure is unreal while the influence of the spiritual life is real. So the real influence draws the striver, who deviates from Yoga, towards God.

'Jijñāsurapi yogasya śabdabrahmātivartate'— In this verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains importance of the seeker of the Yoga in order to describe the importance of the Yogī. When even the seeker of the Yoga transcends the actions and their fruits as laid down in the Vedas, how can the striver having a firm determination for God-Realization have a fall? He will surely attain salvation or God-Realization.

The seeker of Yoga is he who attaches more importance to Yoga than pleasures and prosperity but his desire for pleasures and prosperity has not been wiped out. He has not attained perfection (to Yoga) and is a seeker of Yoga. Even such a seeker transcends the actions and their fruits. Then the striver who has deviated from Yoga is far superior to the seeker. The same fact has been explained by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the fortieth verse of the second chapter when He declares,"In this path of Yoga (equanimity) there is no loss of effort and even a little practice of this discipline protects one from great fear (of birth and death) viz., leads him to salvation." Thus the one who practises Yoga can't have a fall, he will undoubtedly attain perfection or salvation.

An Exceptional Fact

(i) Such strivers who practise Yoga but deviates from it are very rare. Among thousands of people scarcely one strives for perfection (Gītā 7/3) and it is he who deviates from Yoga. There is great glory of such strivers. Even the seeker of the Yoga transcends the fruits of actions viz., he develops disinclination even for the highest level of existence, the Brahmaloka (the abode of Brahmā), because all the worlds including that of Brahmā involve return and rebirth while he does not want rebirth. When there is so much glory of the seeker of Yoga, how far superior should the striver who practises Yoga, be ? The reason is that his aim has been to attain Yoga (equanimity) though at the time of death he has deviated from Yoga.

Therefore, if a striver has an exclusive aim to attain God-Realization, he will transcend the fruits of actions, performed with some motive as laid down in the Vedas.

(ii) Even if a striver fails to attain equanimity, he should have it as his aim. As Tulasīdāsajī has said in the Rāmacaritamānasa about himself that he is a man of the meaner sort but his ambition is very high, he wants to get nectar though even butter milk is not available to him (1/8/4). It means that the striver should have a lofty aim and he should have a keen desire to achieve that aim. It is God's nature that He does not mind the error of the striver but He notices what he wants, and remembers hundreds of times what he has in his heart and is pleased with it (1/29/2-3).

A blind saint went to a temple to behold the Lord. One day a person asked him why he had gone to the temple when he was unable to see the Lord. The saint replied,"It is true that I am unable to see Him. But is He also unable to see me ? My purpose is served when He beholds me."

Similarly, we may not attain equanimity but we should have an aim to attain it. By doing so our purpose will be served because God is omniscient and He knows what a striver has in his heart.

Link:–Now Lord Kṛṣṇa in the next verse describes the condition of the striver who having deviated from Yoga and taken birth in the house of the pious and prosperous, is drawn towards God.

प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धकिल्बिषः ।
अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ ४५ ॥

prayatnādyatamānastu yogī saṁśuddhakilbiṣaḥ
anekajanmasaṁsiddhastato yāti parāṁ gatim

The Yogī who strives with assiduity, purified from sins and perfected through many births, reaches the Supreme state. 45

Comment:

[A dispassionate striver who deviates from Yoga by taking birth in the family of enlightened Yogīs and striving more than

before attains perfection or God-Realization. But how the striver taking birth in the house of the pious and prosperous realizes God, is elucidated in this verse.]

'Tu'— It means when the seeker of the Yoga of equanimity transcends the fruit of actions performed with some motive as laid down in the Vedas, why the Yogī who strives with assiduity should not transcend the fruit of actions and attain perfection. He will attain the Supreme Goal without doubt.

'Yogī'— Yogī is he who wants to attain equanimity or God-Realization and who does not get entangled in the pairs of opposites such as attachment and aversion, pleasures and pain etc.

'Prayatnādyatamānaḥ'— It means that he very assiduously and promptly strives for perfection and his spirituality progresses steadily. He remains constantly conscious that he has to follow this path.

The striver deviating from Yoga takes birth in the house of the pious and prosperous and is drawn on one side towards God by force of the former practice, while on the other side towards the world because of the worldly temptation. If he by diligent efforts and manly behaviour renounces worldly pleasures, he will realize God. The reason is that when even a seeker of Yoga transcends the fruit of action, why will a Yogī who strives with assiduity not realize God? As a person engaged in forbidden action after getting a shock, deviates from it and strives for God-Realization, a striver by taking birth in the house of the pious and prosperous strives for God-Realization.

'Saṁśuddhakilbiṣaḥ'— By all striving for God-Realization, he is purged of sins viz., his desire for pleasures, prosperity praise and honour etc., is completely wiped out. His diligent efforts reveal that he is purged of all sins.

'Anekajanmasaṁsiddhaḥ'* — Spirituality has enhanced in him through successive births. He has been purified from sins in the human birth by practising Yoga, in the second birth in heaven by having disinclination for pleasures, and in the third birth in the house of the pious and prosperous by striving assiduously for God-Realization. Thus he is purified from sins through many births.† Here many births denote these three births.

'Tato yāti parāṁ gatim'—Therefore, he reaches the supreme state. It means that he attains the Supreme Bliss, by gaining which he does not reckon any other gain greater than that, and wherein established he is not moved even by the heaviest affliction (Gītā 6/22).

A Vital Fact

In fact every human being has passed through many births already. Therefore he has been called 'Aneka-janma-saṁsiddha'. In heaven he enjoyed the fruit of his virtuous actions and thus was purged of virtues. In hells by suffering tortures he was purged of sins. Similarly, in the eighty-four lac forms of lives by getting the fruit of his sinful actions he was purged of sins‡. Thus by being purified from virtues and sins he has perfected himself.

Secondly, a human being by striving assiduously can attain the Supreme State or Supreme Goal because the Lord by His grace has bestowed upon him this human birth, the very last of all births so that he may attain the Supreme Bliss. Therefore, every person should strive assiduously to attain perfection or the Supreme Bliss.

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* 'Anekajanma' (many births) means more than one birth.

† Similarly, a dispassionate striver who has deviated from Yoga is purged of sins first by being dispassionate and secondly by striving promptly for God-Realization by getting birth in the family of the Yogī. Thus these two births are many births for him.

‡ A man becomes impure by misusing this human life meant for salvation by doing sins and injustice. In heaven, hell and other births he is only purified.

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa describes glory of Yoga.

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।
कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥ ४६ ॥

tapasvibhyo'dhiko yogī jñānibhyo'pi mato'dhikaḥ
karmibhyaścādhiko yogī tasmādyogī bhavārjuna

The Yogī is superior to ascetics given to worldly pleasures, superior to men of learning even; he is also superior to ritualists. Therefore, Arjuna, be a Yogī. 46

Comment:

'Tapasvibhyo'dhiko yogī'— An ascetic is one who bears hardships voluntarily in order to obtain powers and enjoyments here and hereafter. A Yogī is deemed superior to such ascetics because he through desirelessness attains the Supreme Goal.

'Jñānibhyo'pi mato'dhikaḥ'— 'Jñānī' (men of learning) in this context are those who possess knowledge of the scriptures such as the knowledge of the Disciplines of Knowledge, Action and Devotion etc., and deliver discourses but whose aim is to enjoy pleasures and prosperity. A Yogī is superior to such men of learning.

'Karmibhyaścādhiko yogī'— A Yogī is superior to those ritualists who perform the elaborate rituals such as sacrifice charity and pilgrimage etc., in order to obtain pleasures and prosperity etc., here and hereafter, because his aim is to realize God while the ritualists have a desire for the worldly enjoyments etc.

Thus a Yogī is superior to ascetics, men of learning and ritualists because his aim is to attain God-Realization, while their aim is to enjoy worldly pleasures and prosperity etc. Ascetics, men of learning and ritualists—all the three are engaged in activities. Forbearance in ascetics, learning in Jñānīs and rituals are the special characteristics of the three. All the three having selfish interests are not Yogīs but Bhogīs (sensuous). If they had been selfless Yogīs, God would have neither compared them with a Yogī nor would He have declared a Yogī superior to them.

'Tasmādyogī bhavārjuna'— Therefore, Arjuna, be a Yogī free from attachment and aversion viz., remain detached just like the lotus leaf which though constantly in touch with water does not permit being wetted with it. The same fact has been explained by Lord Kṛṣṇa when He declares, "Be established in Yoga, O Arjuna" (Gītā 8/27).

In the beginning of the fifth chapter Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, "Which of the two renunciation of action (Sāṅkhyayoga) or performance of action (Karmayoga) is better?" In response to his question Lord Kṛṣṇa explained Sāṅkhyayoga (the Discipline of Knowledge), Karmayoga (the Discipline of Action) and Dhyānayoga (the Discipline of Meditation). But He, before this verse, did not order him to be a Yogī. It is only here that He orders him to be a Yogī because it is decidedly good for him.

Link:–In the previous verse Lord Kṛṣṇa praised the Yogī and ordered Arjuna to be a Yogī. But Lord Kṛṣṇa did not explain which Yogī–of Action or Knowledge or Meditation or Devotion, he should be. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa in the next verse orders him to be a Yogī of Devotion.

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।
श्रद्धावान्भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥ ४७ ॥

yoginām̐api sarveṣām̐ madgatenāntarātmanā
śraddhāvānbhajate yo mām̐ sa me yuktatamo mataḥ

Of all Yogīs, he who devoutly worships Me with his mind focussed on Me, is considered by Me to be the best Yogī or the most devout Yogī. 47

Comment:

'Yoginām̐api sarveṣām'— Those Yogīs who want to break off their affinity for Matter and practise the Disciplines of Action, Knowledge and Meditation etc., are superior to ascetics and ritualists etc. But he who devoutly worships Me is the best of all.

'Yaḥ śraddhāvān'— He who has faith only in Me and My glory and existence, worships Me with his mind focussed on Me.

'Madgatenāntarātmanā mām̐ bhajate'— When a striver accepts the affinity that he is God's and God is his, his mind gets engrossed in God automatically. As the mind of a girl after her marriage is absorbed in the affairs of the house of her father-in-law, a devotee's mind gets absorbed in God without making any effort. His mind while he performs several duties of his routine, clings to God automatically.

All activities whether spiritual such as meditation, adoration etc., or physical such as eating, sleeping or pertaining to livelihood such as farming, business or service etc., of the devotee who becomes only God's without having any attachment to the world, are included in adoration.

Lord Kṛṣṇa in the fifty-fifth verse of the eleventh chapter explains the traits of the devotee having exclusive devotion to God that he works for the Lord's sake, depends on Him, is devoted to Him, is free from attachment and is without hatred for any being.

'Sa me yuktatamo mataḥ'— All the strivers who having disinclination for the world are inclined towards spirituality and want to realize God are devout. Those, who seek refuge in the Lord Who is endowed with attributes but is formless viz., all-pervading Lord, are more devout. But those who take refuge in the Lord Who is endowed with attributes are the most devout.

The devotee, who is the most devout, will get mastery over all kinds of disciplines (Yogas) such as of Action, Knowledge and Devotion etc., because God is the great Lord of all the Yogas (disciplines) and when a devotee takes refuge in Him, he becomes the most devout.

The most devout devotee never falls from Yoga because his mind never abandons the Lord and therefore, the Lord also does not abandon him. At the time of death because of unconsciousness or much pain, if he is unable to think of God, God thinks of him*. So how can he fall from Yoga?

It means that the devotee who whole heartedly depends on God without depending on any one else or on his efforts does not fall from Yoga. God does not let him fall. But he who attaches value to worldly things and relies on his efforts, for him there is possibility to fall from Yoga. His fall may be due to his mind's diversion towards the world. A devotee does not fall because at the time of death he calls the Lord as he depends only on Him. Even if he is unable to think of the Lord, the Lord thinks of him because of his exclusive devotion and thus he instead of falling from Yoga attains Him.

The Lord declares such a Yogī the most devout Yogī. It does not mean that other Yogīs don't attain Yoga. It means that though all the Yogīs by breaking off their affinity for the world become completely free from bondage and sins and attain the Supreme Bliss yet, spiritual love manifests itself in

* The Lord declares:—
"I myself think of the wood-like and stone-like devotee at the time of his death and bestow upon him the Supreme State. If a devotee at the time of death because of phlegm and wind etc., can't think of Me, I myself think of him. If I don't do so, no one else can be more ungrateful than I."

him who becomes God's and that love accelerates every moment without any decay, extinction and satiation. It is because of this manifestation that the Lord regards such a devotee as the most devout.

In the beginning of the fifth chapter Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, "Which of the two, the Yoga of Knowledge or the Yoga of Action is better?" Lord Kṛṣṇa replied, "The Yoga (discipline) of Action is superior to the Discipline of Knowledge." But He did not tell him which discipline was good for him. After describing them in the fifth chapter, in the beginning of the sixth chapter He laid emphasis on the glory of the Discipline of Action. Then He described that equanimity which is attained by the Discipline of Action, is also attained by the Discipline of Meditation and He explained the Discipline of Meditation. Then Arjuna said that unsteadiness of mind is an obstacle to meditation. So Lord Kṛṣṇa clarified the doubt. After that Arjuna asked, "What fate does the striver, whose mind is diverted from Yoga at the time of death, meet with?" Lord Kṛṣṇa answered the question and in the forty-sixth verse describing glory of Yoga ordered him to be a Yogī. But Lord Kṛṣṇa did not clearly mention which Yoga in his opinion is superior to others. So in the forty-seventh verse He himself declares, "He who devoutly worships Me is the best Yogī". But Arjuna is not able to understand His view-point and so he will again put the question at the beginning of the twelfth chapter, "Who is the better of the two — the devotees who with their minds constantly fixed in You adore You possessed of form and attributes or those who adore only the Imperishable Formless Brahma?" In response to the question Lord Kṛṣṇa will say, "I consider them to be the best Yogīs who, endowed with supreme faith, and ever united through meditation with Me, Worship Me with the mind centred on Me."

An Exceptional Fact

The Lord declares that the devotee following the Discipline of Devotion is the best Yogī of all the other Yogīs because the man (soul) is a fragment of God and by accepting his affinity for the world and the body he is bound. When he breaks off this assumed affinity, he becomes free and happy. Though in this freedom there is no dependence on things, men and actions etc., yet if he enjoys this freedom by thinking, "I am free from pain and desire," he has subtle affinity for the world. This is finiteness (limitedness) in assumed freedom. This state is called the state of having become one with the Eternal (Gītā 18/54).

This subtle egoism is also wiped out by being established in that state of identity with the eternal because by having no affinity for Matter and its evolutes, egoism which is a fragment of Matter, comes to an end. It means that the Yogīs of Action and Knowledge become free from egoism with the passage of time. But the egoism of a Yogī of Devotion perishes in the very beginning as he becomes God's. A Yogī of Devotion possesses the traits of friendliness, compassion etc., for all beings (Gītā 12/13), which are rarely found in the Yogīs of Action and Knowledge. It means that a devotee following the Discipline of Devotion regards himself as insignificant from the very beginning * and he develops the virtues of politeness, friendliness, compassion and self-satisfaction etc., during the period when he strives and these virtues attain maturity during the state of perfection. Therefore, subtle egoism of a devotee perishes. So the Lord has called such a devotee the best.

The uniqueness of devotion is that it accelerates in the new form, it does neither attenuate nor perish nor get satiated. The Lord also longs for such devotion or love. This desire of the Lord is fulfilled by His devotee. So the Lord has called him superior to others.

There is one more point which needs attention. In the Disciplines of Action and Knowledge a striver has his own faith or

* A devotee regarding himself inferior to a blade of grass, being more tolerant than a tree, showing respect to others without expecting respect from them, always should chant the name of the Lord.

belief and he makes efforts accordingly while a devotee without having any independent faith or belief of his own depends completely on God, he identifies his desire with His desire. He does not worry even to attain salvation or God-Realization. The Lord Himself provides him with the means for his bodily maintenance and protects what has already been provided to him.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे आत्मसंयमयोगो नाम षष्ठोऽध्यायः ॥ ६ ॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde ātmasaṁyamayogo nāma ṣaṣṭho'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ, Tat, Sat the names of the Lord, in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavadgītā, the knowledge of Brahma, the Supreme, the science of Self-control Yoga and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, this is the sixth discourse designated:

By self-control viz., control of the mind the Yogī of Meditation attains Yoga (equanimity). So this chapter is designated 'Ātmasaṁyamayoga' (Yoga of self-control or Yoga of the control of mind).

Words, letters and Uvāca (said) in the Sixth Chapter

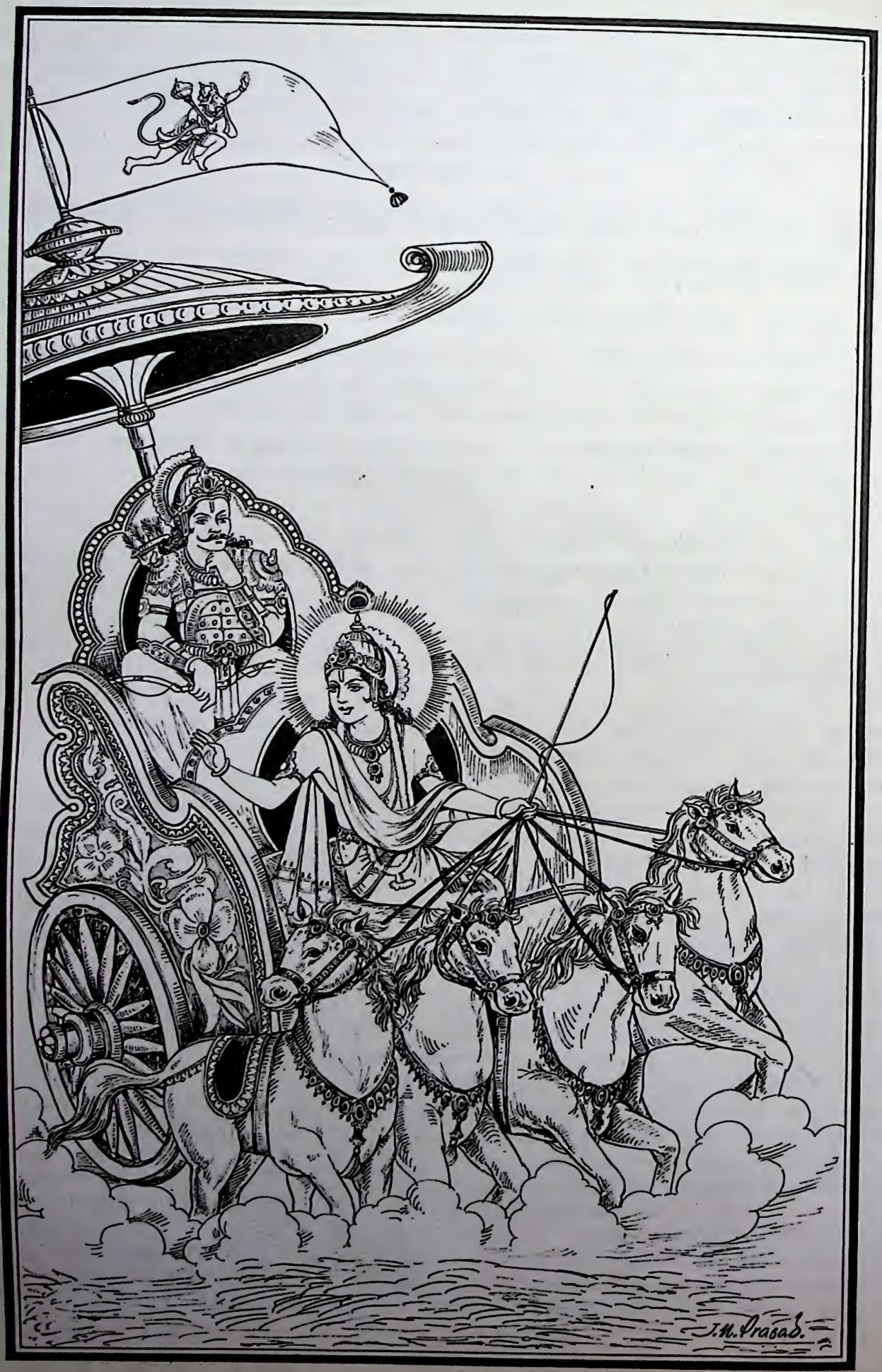
(1) In this chapter in **'Atha ṣaṣṭho'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are three words, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are ten words, in verses there are five hundred and seventy-three words and there are thirteen concluding words. Thus the total number of words is five hundred and ninety-nine.

(2) In this chapter in **'Atha ṣaṣṭho'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are six letters, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are thirty-three letters, in verses there are one thousand five hundred and four letters and there are forty-seven concluding letters. Thus the total number of the letters is one thousand five hundred and ninety.

(3) In this chapter **'Uvāca'** (said) has been used five times **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** thrice and **'Arjuna Uvāca'** twice.

Metres Used in the Sixth Chapter

Out of the forty-seven verses of this chapter, in the first quarter of the first and twenty-six verses 'bha-gaṇa' being used there is **'bha-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the tenth, fourteenth and twenty-fifth verses and in the third quarter of the fifteenth, twenty-seventh, thirty-sixth and forty-second verses 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'na-vipulā'** metre; and in the third quarter of the eleventh verse 'ra-gaṇa' being used there is **'ra-vipulā'** metre. The remaining thirty-seven verses are possessed of the characteristics of right **'pathyāvaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.


J.N. Prasad.

Śrī Hariḥ

SEVENTH CHAPTER

Introduction

Lord Kṛṣṇa in the forty-sixth verse of the sixth chapter described the glory of a Yogī and in the forty-seventh verse He declared, "Of all Yogīs, he who devoutly worships Me with his mind focussed on Me is considered by Me to be the most devout Yogī." When a devotee thinks of God, he gets absorbed in Him. Similarly when something concerning His devotee is discussed, God also gets absorbed in it. In the same state of mind here also Lord Kṛṣṇa full of grace and affection for Arjuna starts the seventh chapter on his own.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मय्यासक्तमनाः पार्थ योगं युञ्जन्मदाश्रयः ।
असंशयं समग्रं मां यथा ज्ञास्यसि तच्छृणु ॥ १ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

mayyāsaktamanāḥ pārtha yogaṁ yuñjanmadāśrayaḥ
asaṁśayaṁ samagraṁ māṁ yathā jñāsyasi tacchṛṇu

The Blessed Lord said :

Listen, O Pārtha (Arjuna), how, with your mind attached to Me, and taking refuge in Me and practising Yoga, you will without any doubt know Me in full. 1

Comment:

'Mayyāsaktamanāḥ—He whose mind is attached to Me alone, has not to think of Me but his mind always remains absorbed in Me. He is not in the least attached to the sensual pleasures of this world or the next world and remains indifferent to comforts, name, fame and other earthly or heavenly acquisitions.

There are two means by which the mind may be attached to Him.

(i) The striver who from his heart depending only on God adores Him, his mind by His grace is attached to Him. As a servant in his master's house even without doing any work on a day gets payment, a devotee with the only aim to attach his mind to Him by depending upon Him gets success in attaching his mind to Him by His grace.

(ii) God pervades everywhere, at all times and all things, men and creatures etc., and He belongs to all. So the devotee thinks that He is here, He is present at this time, He is in him and belongs to him also. By holding so if he chants His name, his mind gets attached to Him very easily during the spiritual practice.

'Madāśrayaḥ'—He takes refuge in Me alone viz., depends on Me alone.

It is the nature of man that he depends on someone or the other. Being a fragment of God, he actually seeks God. But he, without knowing his true affinity for God, accepts his affinity for the body and the world. All the worldly things, including the body, are perishable and so they can't satisfy him, while God is eternal, gracious and omnipotent, so he, by accepting his affinity for Him, should depend on Him only and be a yesman to His will because He creates even unfavourable circumstances for his welfare.

Mind in God gets absorbed through love. Love develops through affinity. Dependence is made on the greatest and the most powerful, God is omnipotent. Therefore a striver should rely on Him only and remain happy in His dispensation. He needs nothing such as an individual, an object or any circumstance. Dependence on God in this way is 'Madāśrayaḥ'.

'Yogaṁ yuñjan'—The striver by

accepting his true affinity for God, remaining equanimous in success and failure adores Him. His performance of different activities either spiritual or mundane, is the practice of Yoga. It means that he, depending on God with his mind attached to Him, accepts his union with Him while discharging his duty. All his activities are according to His will. He does not act in such a way that he may suffer disunion from Him.

'Asaṁśayaṁ samagraṁ māṁ'—He whose mind is attached to the Lord, who depends on Him and who has accepted his true affinity for Him, knows Him in full viz., he knows that the Lord manifests Himself in the form of Lord Śiva, Gaṇeśa, Sūrya (the Sun), Viṣṇu. He is endowed with form and attributes; He is without form and attributes and He is also in the form of incarnations without any doubt.

A Jñānayogī can know Him and realize Him. But a devotee can know Him in full and have His vision in the form of his favourite Deity. The Lord knows not satiety in describing the glories of His devotees.

'Yathā jñāsyasi tacchṛṇu'—By the term 'Yathā'* Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that He will tell him how to know Him; and by the word 'Tat' † He means to say that He will tell him that which he wants to know. In these words Lord Kṛṣṇa by using the second person for Arjuna asks him to listen to Him how he will know Him in full.

In the forty-seventh verse of the sixth chapter in the expression 'He who worships Me endowed with faith, is deemed by Me to be the most devout', the Lord by using 'he' the third person makes a general statement while here in the expression 'Hear how you shall know Me' He uses the second person specially to address Arjuna how he will know Him fully.

In the first six chapters the word 'Samagram' (in full) has not been used for the Lord. So this term signifies different forms of the Lord as well as His glory and other divine traits while this term in the twenty-third verse of the fourth chapter in the expression 'He who works for the sake of sacrifices, the whole action is dissolved' the term 'whole' has been used for action.

An Exceptional Fact

(i) Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that a devotee will know Him in full, if he, instead of having attachment for pleasures, is attached to Him, if he instead of depending on body, family and prosperity depends on Him, and if he has no desire of his own.

(ii) Real affinity for God is called 'Yogam' and assumption (acceptance) of that affinity incessantly is called 'Yuñjan.' It means that a striver instead of assuming his affinity for the body, mind and senses etc., should realize his real affinity for God.

In fact practice of Yoga is not so important as renunciation of attachment for and dependence on the world. By doing so meditation upon God will be practised automatically and all actions will be performed without any desire for their fruit. In that case he will not have to practise Yoga. It means that he who attaches importance to the perishable worldly things and persons etc., can't know the all-pervading God. When a man has connection with a great man of the society, he feels exalted. Similarly, when our intimacy is aroused with God, Who is our disinterested friend and well-wisher and Whose fragment we are, how much exalted we must feel ! In that case unique and supreme love is aroused and the striver's mind gets attached to Him and he depends on Him quite spontaneously.

Synonyms of Śaraṇāgati (Surrender)

'Āśraya', 'Avalambana', 'Adhīnatā', 'Prapatti' and 'Sahārā' are synonyms of the

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* The term 'Yathā' has been used to described how to know him from the gross to the subtle (As water is subtler than earth, fire is subtler than water and air is subtler than fire etc.). It has been described from the fourth to the seventh verses of this chapter.

† 'Tat' means that God is the seed of the world. It has been described from the eighth to the twelfth verses of this chapter.

term 'surrender' (refuge), yet they have different meanings.

(1) **Āśraya:**—We can't live without the support of the earth. In the same way we can't live without the support of God. It is called 'Āśraya.'

(2) **Avalambana:**—When a man's arm is broken, it is dressed and slung from the neck with a band looped round it. Thus the arm is supported with a sling hanging from the neck. In like manner a helpless person seeks refuge in God. This support is called 'Avalambana'.

(3) **Adhīnatā:**—It is of two kinds: (a) Some one may force us to depend upon him. (b) We ourselves may willingly depend on some one. Similarly, a devotee with exclusive devotion and without any selfish motive becomes an attendant to God by regarding Him as his master. This service with exclusive devotion is called 'Adhīnata'.

(4) **Prapatti:**—When a devotee, like a helpless person, who prostrates before a great man, prostrates before God, it is called 'Prapatti.'

(5) **Sahārā:**—When a devotee in order to be liberated from the cycle of birth and death takes refuge in God, like a drowning man who catches at a straw, it is called 'Sahārā'.

A devotee is said to take refuge in God when he is attached only to God and depends only on Him i.e., when he fixes his mind and intellect only on God. When a man himself takes refuge in God with his mind and intellect, he possesses all the virtues of a surrendered devotee.

When a striver resolves that the so-called his mind and intellect are God's, his mind is naturally attached to Him and he depends only on Him i.e., he becomes 'Mayyāsakta-manāḥ' and 'Madāśrayaḥ'.

In fact, all the worldly things are decaying every moment and we being eternal have no real affinity with them. So if we renounce this assumed affinity and have the only aim of salvation, we shall take refuge in Him automatically because we are God's but we have developed disinclination for Him because of our inclination for the world. As soon as this assumed affinity or inclination is renounced, our affinity or inclination for God will manifest itself because that is axiomatic.

Link:—In the first verse Lord Kṛṣṇa asked Arjuna to listen to how he would know Him in full. Now in the next verse He promises to tell him this.

ज्ञानं तेऽहं सविज्ञानमिदं वक्ष्याम्यशेषतः ।
यज्ज्ञात्वा नेह भूयोऽन्यज्ज्ञातव्यमवशिष्यते ॥ २ ॥

jñānaṁ te'haṁ savijñānamidaṁ vakṣyāmyaśeṣataḥ
yajjñātvā neha bhūyo'nyajjñātavyamavaśiṣyate

I shall unfold to you in full this knowledge (wisdom) along with real knowledge of manifest Divinity, having known which nothing more remains to be known. 2

Comment:

'Jñānaṁ te'haṁ savijñānamidaṁ vakṣyāmyaśeṣataḥ'—Lord Kṛṣṇa declares — O Arjuna, I Myself shall teach you in full this 'Jñāna' (knowledge) (wisdom) with 'Vijñāna' (real knowledge of manifest Divinity)*. No one else can describe Me in full because their knowledge about Me is

* Here the adjective 'Vijñāna' qualifies the noun 'Jñāna' and so is superior to 'Jñāna'. Here the belief that the world is born of the Lord and again merges in Him is knowledge (wisdom) (Jñāna) while the realization, that in the world there is nothing else except the manifestation of God, is the real knowledge (Vijñāna).

limited, so they can't know Myself in full*, while My knowledge is limitless and imperishable as I am ever omniscient. After knowing it nothing else remains to be known.

In the sixteenth verse of the tenth chapter Arjuna says to Lord Kṛṣṇa, "You alone can describe in full Your divine glories" (10/16). So Lord Kṛṣṇa in response to his curiosity says, "I shall tell you My conspicuous divine glories because there is no end of My manifestations" (10/19). At the end of this chapter again He declares, "There is no end of My divine glories" (10/40). Here (in 7/2) He declares, "I shall unfold to you this knowledge with real knowledge (Realization), having known which, nothing else remains to be known." It means that God's glories, manifestations and powers etc., are endless. In the Rāmacaritamānasa also it has been declared, "The form of the Lord without attribute is easy to know while the form endowed with attributes is too difficult to know. His manifestations are so varied that even ascetics find themselves at their wits end.

It means that there is no end of the glories of the Lord endowed with attributes. So how can a man know Him by applying his mind ? But a man can know the Divine essence which is all-pervading. As in the different ornaments made of gold, there is nothing but gold, similarly in the whole universe there is nothing else except Divine manifestation. A man can know gold without knowing different ornaments. Similarly, a striver can know that God pervades everywhere all the creatures and things etc., even though he may not know the names of different creatures and things etc., which are His divine glories. By knowing the reality about God nothing else remains to be known in the same way as thirst is quenched after drinking water.

In the second verse of the tenth chapter the Lord declared, "Neither gods nor great sages know the secret of My birth." In the third verse He declares, "He who knows Me as unborn and beginningless, among men is undeluded and purged of all sins." Now the question arises how a man can know Him when even gods and great sages don't know Him. The answer is that if a striver accepts Him as unborn and beginningless with a firm faith, it means that he knows Him because it is within the power of man only to accept Him as unborn and beginningless. As a child can't see the marriage procession of its parents, gods, sages, liberated souls etc., can't know incarnations, sports and divine glories of the Lord, because He is limitless and unfathomable. But he can know Him in essence.

In order to know the Lord in reality, in the Discipline of Knowledge there is pre-eminence of knowledge, while in the Discipline of Devotion there is pre-eminence of assumption or acceptance. If the reality is accepted firmly, it can't be given up because it is real. When no one can force a man to renounce even the false assumption, how can the assumption of the real affinity for God be renounced? This assumption is in no way less significant than knowledge; it is as true as knowledge.

In the Discipline of Devotion there is preeminence of acceptance. In the first verse of the tenth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, "O mighty-armed, listen to My supreme word which I speak to you out of a desire to do you good." Here 'listen' means 'accept'. Here importance is attached to acceptance because it is the context of devotion. In the Discipline of Knowledge importance is attached to knowledge. In the first verse of the fourteenth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, "I impart to you the supreme knowledge, the best of all forms of knowledge, acquiring which all sages have attained the highest perfection." In the

* A man can't describe his own experience in full because the thoughts and feelings can't be clearly expressed in words. When a man can't express his own experience in words, how can he teach and unfold the knowledge (wisdom) along with real knowledge like the Lord?

Discipline of Devotion a striver knows Him by accepting His Existence, while in the Discipline of Knowledge a man accepts Him by knowing Him. In perfection both of them are identified.

An Exceptional Fact Pertaining to Knowledge (Wisdom) and Real Knowledge of Manifest Divinity

The world is born of the Lord and it merges into Him. Therefore, He is the root of the world—this belief (acceptance) is knowledge. There is nothing in the world except God viz., the world is nothing except manifest Divinity—this realization is the real knowledge (Vijñāna).

Lord Kṛṣṇa (in 7/4–6) declares, "My nature is of two kinds—lower and higher and I am the origin of the whole universe." By this declaration Lord Kṛṣṇa explained knowledge (Jñāna). "There is nothing else besides Me. Like clusters of yarn-beads formed by knots on a thread, all this is threaded on Me" (7/7). By this declaration Lord Kṛṣṇa explains real knowledge (Vijñāna).

"I am the sapidity in water, the light in the moon and the sun, the eternal seed of all beings. Whatever other entities there are, born of Sattva (the mode of goodness), of Rājasa (the principle of activity), (the mode of passion) and of Tāmasa (the principle of inertia), (the mode of ignorance), know them all as evolved from Me alone"(7/8–12). By this declaration He explains knowledge. "In reality neither I exist in them nor they in Me viz., I manifest Myself in all forms because none have their free existence" (7/12). By this declaration He explains realization (Vijñāna).

"The whole of this creation is deluded by objects evolved from the three modes of Nature. But those who are not deluded by the modes of Nature but accept that they are born of Me and are absorbed in Me—by accepting so they take refuge in Me alone and cross over the divine illusion of Mine. Such devotees are of four types– the seeker of worldly objects, the sufferer, the seeker of knowledge and the man of wisdom. All these are noble but the man of wisdom is extremely dear to Me and he is My own Self" (7/13–18). By this declaration He explains knowledge, "The man of realization, who realizes that all is God, is very rare (7/19)." By this declaration He explains realization (Vijñāna).

"Those who being motivated by desires worship gods, gain perishable fruit, while those who are My devotees attain Me. I am not manifest to those who don't know Me the unborn and imperishable Supreme Spirit. I know the beings of the past, the present and the future but no one knows Me. Those who are subject to illusion by the delusion of the pairs of opposites follow the cycle of birth and death. But the sins of those who worship Me with a firm resolve, come to an end and they become free from the pairs of opposites" (7/20–28). By this declaration He explains knowledge (Jñāna). "Those who take refuge in Me know Brahma (the Infinite), Adhyātma (Embodied souls), Karma (Action), Adhibhūta (Matter), Adhidaiva (Brahma) and Adhiyajña (the unmanifest Divinity), viz., they realize that I manifest Myself in all the movable as well as the immovable (7/29-30). By this declaration He explains realization (Vijñāna).

'Yajjñātvā neha bhūyo'nyajjñātavyamavaśiṣyate'—After knowing this wisdom with realization, nothing remains to be known. It means that there is nothing else besides Me (Gītā 7/7), and that all is God (7/19). After knowing this reality, nothing else remains to be known. On the other hand if a striver possesses all knowledge about the world without knowing Me all his efforts are in vain, they bear no fruit.

Whatever a striver knows with his senses, mind and intellect, is not true knowledge about God because they all belong to Matter and the Matter can't know the reality which is beyond Matter. When he takes refuge in Him, he knows Him naturally without making any effort, because He can be known by the self, rather than with mind and intellect etc.

Link:–In the second verse Lord Kṛṣṇa said, "I shall unfold to you this knowledge with Realization, having known which nothing remains to be known". How is it that men don't know the reality about God, when nothing else remains to be known? In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa answers the question.

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये ।
यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥ ३ ॥

manuṣyāṇāṁ sahasreṣu kaścidyatati siddhaye
yatatāmapi siddhānāṁ kaścinmāṁ vetti tattvataḥ

Among thousands of men scarcely one strives for perfection and of those who strive, scarcely one knows Me in reality. 3

Comment:

'Manuṣyāṇāṁ sahasreṣu kaścidyatati siddhaye'*—Among thousands of men scarcely one strives for perfection. It means that only those persons who don't indulge in the sensuous pleasures like eating, drinking and enjoying themselves like animals, are human beings in the true sense of the term. Out of those, the men who follow virtues and righteousness are only in thousands. Out of those thousands hardly one strives for Divine perfection or Divine bliss†, having gained which one thinks that there is no greater gain beyond it and there is not the least sorrow.

The persons who have no desire to go to heaven and to enjoy worldly pleasures, respect and praise etc., even when they get an opportunity and have an inclination to them because of past impressions and who don't deviate from their principles and aims, but want to attain Divine perfection, are rare.

Pleasures and prosperity are the obstacles to spiritual progress. Worldly pleasures seem pleasant only in the beginning. If the strivers think over the result of pleasures and prosperity, that they are the gateways to hells and eighty-four lac forms of lives they will start following spiritual practice. Most of the people hanker after worldly pleasures and prosperity. Some of the people who transcend the worldly pleasures run after heavenly pleasures. But there are only a few aspirants who strive for Divine perfection or God-Realization. If we turnover the pages of history, such aspirants are very rarely found, most of them are those who have performed actions and penances etc., in order to reap their fruits.

In fact it is not difficult to attain God-Realization but there are only a few aspirants who strive promptly from their heart to realize Him. Now the question arises why strivers don't strive for God-Realization. The answer is that there are two stumbling blocks—attraction of sensual pleasures and hope to realize Him in future‡.

'Yatatāmapi siddhānām'§—Here

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* If a word is used as an adjective of number, its number is singular. But in the sixth inflexion it has not only the singular number but all the three numbers. Here in the word 'Manuṣyāṇām' there is sixth inflexion in connection with the thousand number and there is seventh inflexion in the plural number in the word 'Sahasrāṇi'. Therefore, the expression 'Manuṣyāṇāṁ sahasreṣu kaścidyatati siddhaye' means 'Manuṣyāṇāṁ sahasrāṇi bhagavati rucim kurvanti sahasreṣu kaścit siddhaye yatati ca' i.e., 'thousands of men have an inclination to God but one of those thousands of men strives to attain perfection.

† Divine perfection does not mean worldly and heavenly enjoyments and accomplishment such as 'Aṇimā, Mahimā' and 'Garimā' etc., because they lead to a downfall and to the cycle of birth and death (9/21). Therefore, here perfection means God-Realization.

‡ God always pervades everywhere, all persons, things, incidents, circumstances and actions etc. Therefore, God-Realization need not be left for the future. He is now, here, in everyone and everyone's. Moreover, He is superior to all the persons etc. By having this belief, mind will be attracted towards Him automatically and a burning desire to realize Him immediately will be aroused.

§ Here the striver has been called 'Siddha' (successful one) according to 'Śātī-sūtra-nyāya' because he will attain perfection in the same way as a saree will be prepared of the Sūtra (thread). If a striver depending on God, having exclusive devotion for Him adores Him in order to realize Him, he will attain perfection, there is no doubt about it. As far as a saree is concerned

'Siddha' (the successful one) is the striver whose mind has been purified and whose only aim is to realize God. Though (in 7/19) the man of realization who realizes that all is God, is called a great soul, yet here in this context the great souls are those strivers who possessing a divine nature, worship the Lord constantly with exclusive devotion (Gītā 9/13), and strive to realize Him.

Here 'Yatatām' means that the strivers want to realize God from their heart and so strive for Divine perfection and naturally think of Him with reverence.

'Kaścinmāṁ vetti tattvataḥ'— 'Scarcely one knows Me in reality.' Here it does not mean that the strivers who strive to know Him, can't know Him. But it means that at present any one striver out of the assiduous strivers knows Him in reality; out of those who know Him, scarcely any one can speak of Him and explain to others. Other learned persons may be there who may have knowledge but they can't explain to others. The Lord declares, "One looks upon Him as a marvel; another likewise speaks of Him as a marvel" (Gītā 2/29).

Generally people illustrate this verse in order to explain that it is very difficult to attain Divine perfection. But actually it is not so. In order to attain Divine perfection it is difficult to have a keen desire and for the fulfilment of that desire it is difficult to have company of liberated souls. Here Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, "I shall unfold (teach) to you in full this knowledge combined with realization and you will know it." Such an omniscient speaker as Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself and such an inquisitive striver as Arjuna are very rare. The fact is that it is difficult to have a keen desire. By having a keen desire, the striver has no responsibility of his own, the responsibility is shouldered by the Lord.

By using 'Tattvataḥ' (In truth) Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that a striver comes to know the truth (reality) about Him that He manifests Himself in the form of Lord Śiva, Gaṇeśa, Sūrya (the sun), Viṣṇu, incarnations and He is possessed of form and attributes and He is also without form and attributes i.e., he knows that there is no existence in the least besides the Lord.

Link:–In the second verse Lord Kṛṣṇa promised Arjuna to unfold to him knowledge combined with realization. In keeping with His promise, Lord Kṛṣṇa proceeds in the next verse to explain knowledge with realization.

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च।
अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा॥ ४॥*
अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम्।
जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत्॥ ५॥

bhūmirāpo'nalo vāyuḥ khaṁ mano buddhireva ca
ahaṅkāra itīyaṁ me bhinnā prakṛtiraṣṭadhā
apareyamitastvanyāṁ prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām
jīvabhūtāṁ mahābāho yayedaṁ dhāryate jagat

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it may be prepared out of the thread or even any other cloth may be prepared out of the thread or the thread may be destroyed. But the devotee who adores God with exclusive devotion will certainly attain perfection.

* The entity which is kaleidoscopic and never remains the same has been mentioned as perishable (in 15/16), lower (insentient) Nature (in 7/4) and of twenty-four categories— five subtle elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth), ego, intellect, Primordial Matter, ten organs, mind and five objects of senses (sound, touch, colour, taste, smell) (in 13/5).

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect, ego—these constitute My nature (Prakṛti) eight fold divided. This is My lower (insentient) nature; but different from it, O mighty armed, is My higher (sentient) nature—the life element by which this universe is sustained. 4-5

Comment:

'Bhūmirāpo'nalo vāyuḥ kham mano buddhireva ca ahaṅkāra itīyam me bhinnā prakṛtiraṣṭadhā apareyamitastvanyām prakṛtim viddhi me parām'—God is the origin of the whole creation wielding his own nature, he brings forth the whole creation. This nature is called the Lower Nature while the embodied soul which is a fragment of God is called Higher nature. The Lower nature is inferior, insentient and changeful while Higher nature is superior, sentient and changeless.

Everyman's nature is different. As a man's nature cannot be proved to have its own separate entity independent of that man similar is the case with that of God's nature. This nature is God's own disposition therefore, it is called His nature. Similarly the embodied soul being a portion of God cannot be proved to have its own separate existence independent of God as it is God itself. Though God itself but it is named Nature because of its affinity with Lower Nature. As it accepts the activities of the Lower Nature as its own or in other words he attributes the doership to himself therefore, it is called superior Nature or embodied soul otherwise, it is nothing else than God. When it becomes free from the bondage of being a doer and an enjoyer (Gītā 18. 17) it is no more higher nature or embodied soul.

Here the Lower Nature includes earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and ego. If out of these eight the five gross elements are supposed to represent the gross creation and the three-mind, intellect and ego are to represent the whole subtle creation then this description of nature remains incomplete as it leaves out the causal creation. To prove that in this description of nature, all the parts of nature have been included, the venerable commentators have interpreted them in the following way. according to them the five gross elements stand for gross as well as their causes five subtle Tanmātrās, mind stands for its origin ego; intellect stands for cosmic intelligence and 'ego' stands for the causal nature. Thus this interpretation includes the full description of cosmic nature as it includes all the three gross, subtle and causal creation.

In the scriptures this cosmic nature has been described as Prakṛti and Vikṛti. But here a point needs attention that Lord Kṛṣṇa has not described lower and higher nature here from the view point of Prakṛti and Vikṛti or Nature cum its evolutes. Had the Lord defined so He would have not called the individual soul as Higher nature because the soul is neither Prakṛti—the cause of any evolute nor Vikṛti—the evolute itself. The soul is immutable and changeless. It proves that the Lord has described Matter as the Lower Nature and the individual soul as Higher nature just in order to distinguish the insentient from the sentient.

According to the author this eight fold division of Nature includes the gross and subtle creation only. The five gross elements enumerated here include the gross creation. These five elements also represent subtle creation as these are the evolutes of five subtle Tanmātrās. Mind, intellect and ego described here, are also a part of the subtle creation.

The ego has two aspects. The ego is Matter in its nature and it is a modification or a trait of the inner sense (अन्तःकरण). It is a sort of instrument. This is called in the fourth verse as ego a part of Lower Nature. The second aspect of ego is one's own personality and it represents itself as the 'doer' This is described in the fifth verse of this chapter by the name of Higher nature. This 'ego' is the result of the soul's identification with causal body.

This identification has two factors—insentient and sentient. The insentient factor is the causal body and one who cultivates egoistic notion is sentient factor until Self-realisation this ego persists

assuming itself always as 'doer'. During deep sleep it lies dormant or is not manifest. After waking up "I slept soundly and am awake" the man making this statement represents the ego the Higher Nature. After Waking up he thinks "where and how he is", this is wakefulness of mind and when he knows that he is at a particular place and time, this is the wakefulness of the intellect. Thus one who experiences his entity is the ego representing Higher Nature and through the ego with which he makes such experience is a trait of the inner sense, It is Lower nature.

When the soul the sustainer and illuminator of this lower Nature—identifies itself with this nature, it itself is then called Higher nature or the embodied soul. This fact has been described in Gītā by the term ययेदं धार्यते जगत्—by whom this insentient Nature is sustained.

If this sentient Nature (soul or spirit) without having any inclination for the insentient Nature, has an inclination for God i.e., accepts Him as Its own, It realizes the Self and then its (soul's or man's) attachment for the world turns into love for God*.

This Divine love is limitless, it is in the form of bliss and it increases every moment. After attaining it nothing else remains to be attained; after realizing the Self nothing remains to be known and after applying all the objects etc., of the lower Nature for the service of the world and having disinclination for them, nothing remains to be done. This is the state of perfection of human life.

'Prakṛtiraṣṭadhā apareyam'—It seems that this eightfold lower Nature is individual lower Nature, because a man is bound because of his affinity for his body. If a man (soul) does not accept his affinity for it, there is no question of any bondage. The man himself (soul or spirit) sustains this universe viz., accepts his relationship with the universe and that relationship leads him to bondage.

An individual body has no separate entity different from the universe. When a man (the self) assumes his affinity for the body, he is bound. If he does not assume this affinity, there is no question of bondage.

In the seventh verse of the fifteenth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, "The soul in the body is an eternal fragment of Myself." But it attracts the mind and the senses that rest in Matter viz., it accepts the mind and the senses as its own. In the same way in the fifth verse of the thirteenth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa describes the universe as Kṣetra (Field) and in the sixth verse describes its evolutes (modifications). But actually these evolutes are found, not in the universe, but in the body. Thus affinity for the body is the main obstacle to emancipation. This body being a fragment of the universe, can't be separated from it.

The fact is that Primordial Matter is neither a means nor an obstacle to emancipation. When a striver does not accept his affinity for it, it proves helpful. But when he accepts his affinity for it, it proves an obstacle because it is affinity for Prakṛti (Matter) which gives birth to egoism ('I'ness). This egoism is the cause of bondage. By the phrase 'Itīyam me' Lord Kṛṣṇa here warns us that this Primordial Matter or lower Nature is His. So a striver should not accept it as his own otherwise this affinity will lead him to the wheel of birth and death.

In egoism (I'ness) there are two desires—desire for pleasure as well as desire for knowledge. The desire for pleasure can be wiped out by the Discipline of Action while the desire for knowledge can be satisfied by the Discipline of Knowledge. Thus the striver who is firmly established in either of the two gets the fruit of both (The Gītā 5/4-5) i.e., when the desire for pleasures is wiped out, the desire for knowledge is satisfied and when the desire for knowledge is satisfied, the desire for pleasures is wiped out. When the desire for pleasures is wiped out or the desire for knowledge is satisfied, there develops detachment automatically. If the striver does not enjoy that detachment i.e., he is not pleased with that state, he attains Self-Realization and his human life proves fruitful.

'Jīvabhūtām'—Actually the soul is a fragment of God but by accepting Its affinity for physical, subtle and causal bodies It has become embodied soul. It accepts Its affinity in order to enjoy the mundane pleasures

* The striver following the Discipline of Knowledge will have revelation of love for God in the form of Self-Realization while a devotee following the Discipline of Devotion will have that revelation in the form of Divine love. Thus from this point of view the striver following the Discipline of Knowledge and that following the Discipline of Devotion—both become one.

which lead It to great affliction in the form of birth and death.

'Mahābāho'—O Arjuna, being mighty armed, you are very brave and powerful and you can understand the difference between the lower Nature (Matter) and the higher Nature (Soul). Therefore, understand (know) it.

'Yayedaṁ dhāryate jagat'*—In fact this universe is the manifestation of God i.e., all the universe is God (7/19) and He is being and non-being both (9/19). The man (soul) has sustained this universe i.e., the man (soul) by accepting the free existence of this universe has started using it for his own pleasure and thus it has led him to bondage. If he takes this universe as the manifestation or revelation of God, he will be free from the shackles of birth and death.

The world is transitory and kaleidoscopic, but the man thinks it permanent and pleasing because of his temptation and attachment for pleasures and things by having the feelings of 'I' and 'mine'. It is because of his attachment for pleasures and prosperity that he can't behold this world as the manifestation of God. As a voluptuary can't behold a woman as mother, so can a person having attachment for the worldly pleasures and prosperity not behold that the lord Himself has manifested Himself in the form of the world. This attachment to pleasures sustains the universe i.e., is the cause of sustaining the universe.

Secondly, all human beings are born of sperm and ovum which themselves are filthy and impure. But a voluptuary thinks the body as charming and beautiful because of his attachment for pleasures. This thought sustains the world.

Once a gentleman said to a saint, who was standing on the bank of a river, "Sir, the water of this river and the men, on the bridge are flowing." The saint said, "O brother, it is not only the water of the river or the men that are moving but the river and the bridge themselves are also moving." It means that all of them are moving towards destruction. One day they will come to an end. Actually the whole world is perishing every moment. In fact the soul is neither born nor does It decay. But by identifying Itself with the body It accepts body's birth and death as Its own birth and death. If It does not identify itself with the body nor does It accept affinity for it, this world can't be seen real.

The term 'Idam' means that as both the body and the world are one and the same, their difference is not real, it is merely assumed. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa in the thirteenth chapter says that this body is spoken of as Field (Kṣetra) (13/1); but where there is description of this Field, there is the description of the world (13/5) while the evolutes such as desire, aversion, pleasure and pain etc., have been described in the individual body (13/6). It means that the world and the body are essentially the same. If we accept the body as 'I', it gives birth to egoism (I'ness) and if we accept the body as 'Mine' it gives birth to 'Mineness' and both of them lead to bondage. If we realize that the body and the world belong to one and the same class and the man himself (soul) and God belong to one class which is quite different from that of the body and the world, egoism (I'ness) and 'Mineness' perish automatically. They can be wiped out by the three Disciplines–of Action, (2/71) Knowledge (18/53) and Devotion (12/13). It means that the assumed affinity for Matter should be broken off and it can be broken off by accepting reality by means of discrimination.

An Exceptional Fact

A teacher and a pupil have their own separate entity or existence. But by having love and regard for each other there is third existence of affinity between the two.† Similarly, the soul which is a fragment of the Lord, has accepted its affinity with the body and the world. It is because of this affinity that there appears to be a third

* In the Gītā the term 'Jagat' (universe) denotes higher Nature (in 7/13), lower Nature (in 7/5) and higher and lower Nature both (in 7/6).

† In Teacher relationship the duty of the teacher is to do good to the pupil and the duty of the pupil is to serve the teacher. In the same way every relationship of the world is to do good to others or serve others without any selfish motive.

existence which is called 'I'ness. This affinity of 'I'ness is merely assumed, not real. But the soul by accepting it as real gets into bondage.

The teacher and the pupil have their separate existence and both of them accept their affinity for each other. But out of the soul (sentient) and the world (insentient or Matter), only the soul has Its own existence and It, by an error, accepts Its relationship with the world which is kaleidoscopic and which is perishing every moment. This assumed relationship is also decaying every moment. But it seems real to those who want to seek pleasures in the world. It is because of their attachment for the worldly pleasures that the world which is never attained, seems to be attained; while God Who is ever attained seems unattained to them. As soon as they are free from this assumed affinity for the world, they will realize the reality of their affinity—that they have their affinity for God; and only He, not the world, can be attained.

To wipe out this feeling of 'I'ness a striver should have a firm belief that he is different from Matter, he should not expect anything from the world but perform actions for the service of the world because whatever strength, intelligence and resources he possesses, he has received from the world. By following this Discipline of Action the flow of actions and objects is towards the world and the self remains and he attains Self-Realization. By following the Discipline of Knowledge also by using discrimination a striver by breaking off his affinity for the things and actions of the world, attains Self-Realization. Thus by breaking off his affinity for Matter, he becomes free from his assumed, 'I' ness. Devotion to God is aroused in the Discipline of Devotion by accepting 'I am only God's and only God is mine, I am not of the body and the world, and the body and the world are not mine'. Then the striver having a disinclination for the world depends only on God and thus he becomes free from the affinity of the world and egoism ('I'ness).

Thus by following either the Discipline of Action or the Discipline of Knowledge or the Discipline of Devotion in the right perspective, a striver becomes free from the affinity of Matter and realizes God.

Link:–In the previous verse Lord Kṛṣṇa said, "The higher (sentient) nature has sustained the lower (insentient) nature." He clarifies it in the next verse.

एतद्योनीनि भूतानि सर्वाणीत्युपधारय ।
अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा ॥ ६ ॥

etadyonīni bhūtāni sarvāṇītyupadhāraya
aham kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayastathā

Know that all beings have evolved from this twofold Prakṛti (the insentient and the sentient Nature) and I am the origin (source) of the entire creation and again it dissolves in Me. 6

Comment:

'Etadyonīni bhūtāni'— All the beings — gods, men, animals, birds etc., which move and also trees, creepers and grass etc., which do not move, have their origin in the union of My insentient and sentient Nature.

In the twenty–sixth verse of the thirteenth chapter also the Lord declares, "Whatever being, moving or unmoving is born; know that as emanated from the union of Kṣetra (Matter) and Kṣetrajña (spirit)." The same fact has been pointed out in the fourth verse of the fourteenth chapter when He declares, "My Prakṛti (Nature) (Primordial Matter) is the womb of the bodies of creatures and the soul (seed) which resides in those bodies is My fragment." The same seed or soul has been called His higher (sentient) Nature (7/5) and His eternal portion (15/7).

'Sarvāṇītyupadhāraya'—In the

universe all the moving and unmoving creatures are born of the union of the sentient and the insentient Nature (Matter). It means that the soul has accepted Matter as its own and keeps its company and so beings are born — so sustain this fact i.e., understand it in the right perspective or accept it.

'Aham kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayastathā'— All the objects emanate from God and again dissolve in Him. So the Lord declares, "I am the origin of the entire creation and again it dissolves in Me."

The Lord is the source of the entire creation because the entire creation comes into existence by His will* (Chāndogya 6/2/3). As a potter makes earthenwares and a goldsmith makes ornaments of gold so does the Lord create this world. Thus like the potter and the goldsmith He is the efficient cause of this world.

The universe again dissolves in Him. As an earthen vessel is clay now, it was clay in the past before it was moulded in this shape and will remain clay when the vessel is broken into pieces, similarly the creation is born of the Lord, resides in Him and merges (dissolves) in Him. Thus he is the material cause of this creation. This is knowledge. The realization that in the world there is nothing besides the manifestation of the Lord is Vijñāna (Real Knowledge of Manifest Divinity).

In the expression 'Kṛtsnasya jagataḥ' Lord Kṛṣṇa declares Himself to be the origin of the entire creation, and also its dissolution. Here it is proper for Him to tell Himself the origin and dissolution of Matter (insentient Nature). But how is the origin of the soul (sentient or higher Nature) and its dissolution possible? The soul is eternal, omnipresent, immovable, constant and everlasting (Gītā 2/24) while the world is kaleidoscopic. But here the word 'creation' denotes both the lower Nature (Matter) and higher Nature (Soul). The reason is though the soul is eternal, changeless and constant yet It identifies Itself with the perishable Matter and thus accepts its (insentient's) creation and dissolution. Its (sentient's) own creation and dissolution. So the soul is said to be born and decayed. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa has declared Himself to be the origin of the entire creation and also its dissolution. Thus within the creation all the moving, unmoving; sentient, insentient beings will be included. Moreover, Lord Kṛṣṇa in the thirteenth verse of this chapter declares, "The whole of this creation being deluded by objects evolved from the three modes of Nature does not know Me." Only the sentient can know Him. Therefore the term "Jagat" (universe) includes both Matter (the insentient) as well as soul (the sentient).

In the eighth verse of the sixteenth chapter, according to the men of demoniacal traits the universe includes both insentient and sentient beings because they accept all beings, not only insentient ones, as unreal. If the term 'Jagat' (universe) is interpreted as only Matter, the follower of non-dualistic principle who accept the universe as unreal, untrue and baseless, will be included among the men of demoniacal traits, which is totally improper and unjustified. Similarly, in the twenty-sixth verse of the eighth chapter there is description of the two paths the bright and the dark of the world. But the paths can be followed by the sentient only. The sentient by identifying itself with Matter is called 'Jagat' (world or universe).

Thus we conclude that the soul by identifying Itself with Matter is called embodied soul (world or universe). But when it having disinclination for Matter realizes its identity with pure consciousness (God), this individual soul becomes the Cosmic Soul. Such a person is called a Yogī.

Link:–In the preceding verse Lord Kṛṣṇa declared Himself to be the origin of the whole universe (world). In the next verse He declares that besides Him there is nothing else in the universe.

* There is a fact which needs attention that only Kṣetrajña (spirit), not Kṣetra (Matter) has accepted this affinity. If it does not accept this affinity, it can't be reborn because "Attachment to these Guṇas (modes) is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs"(13/21).

मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय।
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥ ७ ॥

mattaḥ parataraṁ nānyatkiñcidasti dhanañjaya
mayi sarvamidaṁ protaṁ sūtre maṇigaṇā iva

O Arjuna, there is nothing else besides Me. Like clusters of Yarn-beads formed by knots on a thread, all this is threaded on Me. 7

Comment:

'Mattaḥ parataraṁ nānyat-kiñcidasti dhanañjaya'—There is nothing else besides Me, the origin of the universe. As air is born of ether, resides in ether and merges in ether without having any independent existence of its own, so is the universe born of the Lord, remains established in Him and merges in Him i.e., the universe has no independent existence of its own besides the Lord.

Here the term 'Parataram' means that the Lord is the root of all the things, persons, incidents, circumstances and time etc., of the world. He is the cause of all causes. There is no cause of Him. It means that they all seem to exist in His true light, only He pervades all of them.

Lord Kṛṣṇa in the second verse of this chapter announced that He would unfold in full the knowledge (wisdom) along with real knowledge of manifest Divinity (Vijñāna), having known which nothing else would remain to be known. But here He declares that there is no origin of the universe besides Him. In both the verses by using the expression 'Na anyat' (No anything) He means to say, when there is nothing besides Him, how can anything else remain to be known after knowing Him? Therefore, here Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "All this is threaded (strung) on Me" and further He declares 'All is God' (7/19) and 'I am being and non-being both' (9/19). The effect has no independent entity except its cause. The cause only is manifest in its effect. When the cause is realized (known) the effect merges in the cause. It means that the effect has no separate entity from the cause. Similarly it can be realized that God is the cause and the world is the effect. Hence the world has no separate entity from God. This is God-Realization. Actually it is He who manifests Himself in different forms i.e., this universe is nothing besides the Divine manifestation. Thus a striver will come to know that the entire universe is His manifestation.

'Mayi sarvamidaṁ protaṁ sūtre maṇigaṇā iva'—"The whole universe like clusters of yarn-beads formed by knots on a thread, is threaded on Me." As in the cluster of yarn-beads and in thread there is nothing besides the thread, in the world there is nothing else besides the Lord. As the beads and thread though being one and the same, seem different, all the beings having different shapes and names seem to be different, but actually it is all Divine manifestation. Lord Kṛṣṇa in the second verse of the thirteenth chapter declares, "Know Myself to be the 'Kṣetrajña' (soul) in all the Kṣetras (Fields or Matter)." It means that His lower Nature in the form of beads is His own self and His higher Nature in the form of thread is also His own self. He pervades the two. So long as a striver attaches importance to the world, he can't realize God Who pervades everywhere in this universe. But when he comes to know the reality, he realizes that He and only He pervades everywhere and there is nothing else besides Him. To impress the fact that all things are pervaded only by God, the Lord has described Him self as the cause of all manifestations.

Link:–Now Lord Kṛṣṇa in the verses eighth to twelfth declares that He Himself becomes all the manifestations.

रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिसूर्ययोः ।
प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥ ८ ॥

raso'hamapsu kaunteya prabhāsmi śaśisūryayoḥ
praṇavaḥ sarvavedeṣu śabdaḥ khe pauruṣaṁ nṛṣu

O son of Kuntī, I am sapidity in water, radiance in the moon and the sun; I am the sacred syllable Oṁ in all the Vedas, sound in ether and manliness in men. 8

Comment:

[Generally people attach a lot of importance to money. So greedy people have a natural inclination to earn money and accumulate it. Similarly, the Lord is the source of the entire creation (7/6), there is no existence of the creation besides the Lord. By accepting this fact, a striver has his natural inclination towards Him without making any effort. The same fact has been pointed out by the Lord in the eighth verse of the tenth chapter when He declares, "I am the source of the creation, all things evolve from Me. Knowing this the wise adore Me with all their heart." In the forty-sixth verse of the eighteenth chapter He declares, "He from whom the evolution of all beings is by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping Him through the performance of his own duty, man attains perfection". Here the same principle is explained.]

'Raso'hamapsu kaunteya'—'O son of Kuntī, I am sapidity in water'. Water emanates from subtle form of sapidity, (Rasa Tanmātra)* it remains in it and it merges in it. If sapidity is extracted from water, water can't remain water.

'Prabhāsmi śaśisūryayoḥ'—"I am radiance† (light) in the moon and the sun." Without radiance the moon and the sun will become fruitless and useless.

'Praṇavaḥ sarvavedeṣu'—"I am the syllable Oṁ in all the Vedas". First of all there was revelation of the syllable Oṁ. It was from this sacred syllable Oṁ that Gāyatrī was revealed and it was from Gāyatrī that the Vedas were revealed. Therefore, the gist of the Vedas is the sacred syllable Oṁ.

'Śabdaḥ khe'—Ether emanates from the subtle element sound, it remains in it and merges in it. Therefore, sound manifests itself as ether. Without sound ether is meaningless.

'Pauruṣaṁ nṛṣu'—"I am manliness in men." It is not enough for a man to possess the human body in order to gain worldly riches, knowledge, name and fame etc., because all of them are perishable. The real man is he who has attained God realisation, the ultimate aim of human life. God existed in the past, exists now and will also exist in future because He is eternal. Therefore a man's 'Puruṣārtha' consists in making efforts with promptness and zeal to realize God. Without attaining Him human life is in vain.

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* The causes of the five gross elements — earth, water, fire, air and ether are respectively smell, taste, form, touch and sound which are called five 'Tanmātrā (seeds). These five seeds can't be known by senses and mind but they are only assumed by hearing the scriptures. The evolutes of these five seeds are also smell, taste, form, touch and sound which can be known by senses and mind.

† In subtle element fire there are two powers—radiance (brilliance) and combustion (burning). Radiance is called 'Prabhā' and combustion is known as 'Teja'. The power of radiance can function without the power of combustion as in gems and the moon, but the power of combustion can't function without radiance. Here in this verse there is pre-dominance of radiance while in the ninth verse of this chapter there is pre-dominance of the power of combustion. So there the term 'Teja' has been used.

The sun and fire possess both of these powers while in the moon there is only radiance, and instead of combustion there is mildness.

पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ ।
जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥ ९ ॥

puṇyo gandhaḥ pṛthivyāṁ ca tejaścāsmi vibhāvasau
jīvanaṁ sarvabhūteṣu tapaścāsmi tapasviṣu

I am sweet fragrance in earth, combustion in fire; I am life in all beings and austerity in ascetics. 9

Comment:

'Puṇyo gandhaḥ pṛthivyām'—The earth is born of subtle element, smell, stays in it and merges in it. The earth is of no importance without sweet fragrance, fragrance is the characteristic of the element, earth. So the Lord declares, "I am sweet fragrance in earth." The Lord uses the objective 'Puṇya' (sweet) in order to explain that naturally there is sweet fragrance in the earth. But bad smell is produced because of any defect.

'Tejaścāsmi vibhāvasau'—Combustion is born of subtle element, fire, stays in it and at the end merges in it. Therefore in fire combustion is the essence. In fire if there is no combustion it is useless. So the Lord is that combustion.

'Jīvanaṁ sarvabhūteṣu'—Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, "I am life in all beings." All beings possess life-power by which they live alive. It is because of that power that a man even in sound sleep remains different from a dead man.

'Tapaścāsmi tapasviṣu'—Endurance in the pairs of opposites is called austerity (Tapa). But real austerity is that in which a striver remains uniform (unaltered) in difficulties which he has to face in realizing God. This austerity is the invaluable possession of ascetics. Without austerity they can't be called ascetics. So Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, "I am austerity in ascetics."

बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम् ।
बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ॥ १० ॥

bījaṁ māṁ sarvabhutānāṁ viddhi pārtha sanātanam
buddhirbuddhimatāmasmi tejastejasvināmaham

O Pārtha, know Me as the eternal seed of all beings; I am the intelligence of the intelligent, the glory (splendour) of the glorious (splendid). 10

Comment:

'Bījaṁ Māṁ sarvabhūtānāṁ viddhi* pārtha sanātanam'—O Pārtha, I am the eternal seed (source) of all beings. All of them are born of Me Who am their seed, live in Me and in the end merge in Me. They without Me have no existence of their own.

A seed is born of a tree and it perishes after giving birth to a tree. But the seed described in this verse is eternal without its origin and end. In the eighteenth verse of the ninth chapter it has been called 'Imperishable seed'. Remaining imperishable and unaltered, this eternal seed is the source, producer, resort and illuminator

* In the sixth verse of this chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa used the term 'Upadhāraya' (know) and here he uses the term 'Viddhi' (know). It means that he wants to say that the striver should understand, know and accept the fact that the universe is nothing besides the Divine manifestation.

of the entire universe.

In the Gītā the word 'Seed' has been used both for God and the embodied soul. In this verse 'Seed' denotes God because here the divine glories have been described. In the thirty-ninth verse of the tenth chapter also the word 'Seed' denotes God because there Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, "I am the seed of all beings." In the eighteenth verse of the ninth chapter also this word has been used for God because in the nineteenth verse of that chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, "I am being and non-being both." In the fourth verse of the fourteenth chapter the term 'Seed' stands for the embodied soul. The seed signifies the embodied soul only when It has accepted Its affinity for Matter (Nature) otherwise it is an over soul (God).

'Buddhirbuddhimatāmasmi'— "I am the intelligence of the intelligent". People are called intelligent only because of their intelligence, otherwise they will be called dull.

'Tejastejasvināmaham'—The Lord is the glory of the glorious. This glory is a divine trait. The liberated souls possess a special glory which enables even dissolute and immoral persons to become virtuous.

An Exceptional Fact

God is the origin of the whole universe. He always pervades everywhere. He remains even when the entire universe perishes. In the universe there is nothing besides God. Therefore, in the Upaniṣads (portions of the different branches of the Vedas) there are illustrations of gold, clay and iron. As in the ornaments made of gold there is nothing besides gold, in the pots made of clay there is nothing besides clay and in the arms and weapons made of iron there is nothing besides iron, similarly in the entire universe which is born of God, there is nothing besides God. In the Gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa has given the illustration of a seed. A seed is born of a tree and after giving birth to a tree, it perishes. But God is not an ordinary seed, He is an eternal seed (7/10) and an imperishable seed (9/18). It means that unlike an ordinary seed which after giving birth to the tree perishes, He does not perish, He remains the same.

Gold, clay and iron are seen with the physical eyes in ornaments, earthenwares and arms respectively but God is not seen in the world. But the seed is not seen in the tree. When the tree sprouts the seed in the form of fruit, then we come to know that the tree is born of that particular seed though the tree is born of the seed and ends in the seed. Similarly, God is the seed of the entire universe. This universe is born of Him and merges in Him. At last only God remains. (Śrīmadbhāgavata 10/3/25) Those who see only the tree and the world instead of the seed and God don't see in the right perspective. It is only He Who reveals Himself in various forms (Chāndogya 6/2/3).

The universe including the body is made of the five subtle elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether but it so appears only if we think over it seriously, otherwise not. If we say that these physical bodies are made of earth because there is predominance of earth-element, people without a serious thought don't believe because they say that the bodies are different from earth (clay) with which they wash hands. But if the entire universe is burnt to ashes, nothing will remain besides earth (clay).

If we give a serious thought, we come to know that the body is born of the parents' sperm and ovum which are born of corn (grain) which is born of earth. Thus the body is born of earth. At last it merges in earth. After death the body is either buried, or burnt or eaten by animals and birds. In either case it turns into earth. Thus the origin and the end of the body is earth. It means that its middle is also earth, though it is not seen with the physical eyes, it can be perceived by thought. Similarly, by thinking seriously, the world can be perceived as the manifestation of the Lord. In the entire universe there is nothing else besides the Lord. Having created the universe (the bodies) He has also entered it. (Taittirīyopaniṣad 2/6). He as the self (soul)

also abides in these bodies. Thus the entire universe is His manifestation.

बलं बलवतां चाहं कामरागविवर्जितम्।
धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ॥ ११॥

balaṁ balavatāṁ cāhaṁ kāmarāgavivarjitam
dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu kāmo'smi bharatarṣabha

I am the strength of the strong devoid of desire and passion (attachment); in beings I am desire not in conflict with virtue or scriptural injunction. 11

Comment:

'Balaṁ balavatāṁ cāhaṁ kāmarāgavivarjitam'—The strength free from desire and attachment utilized on noble and holy cause and sanctioned by the scriptures and saints gets sanctified and therefore the Lord declares, "I am the strength of the strong free from desire and attachment." This strength is acceptable.

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself has explained that the strength possessed of attachment and desire should be abandoned (17/5) because it is a demoniacal trait. Similar is the case with the strength used in 16/14, 16/18 and 18/53. In 6/34 it has been used as an adjective for mind and it is a demoniacal trait because it is also possessed of attachment and desire. Thus this kind of strength (power) is to be abandoned. But the strength free from desire and attachment as explained in 7/11 as well as in 17/8, is sanctified strength which is acceptable.

'Dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu kāmo'smi bharatarṣabha'—"I am righteous sexual desire approved by the scriptures." The sexual desire free from attachment and pleasure* is laudable because it helps in producing offsprings and it remains under the control of man. But the sexual desire possessed of attachment and pleasure misguides a man, enables him to perform actions against dictates of the scriptures and leads him to afflictions, sins and degradation.

The people who, by using birth-control methods indulge in sexual intercourse for sensual pleasure, pave the way to hells. Men and women in the true sense of the terms are those who can produce children, otherwise they are impotent. An eunuch person is not authorized to perform religious rites such as religious sacrifice and offering of water and food etc., to manes. A woman is called a mother, because she gives birth to children who call her mother. Therefore, the strivers should have sexual desire to produce children according to the ordinance of the scriptures in order to lead a pious family life or they should observe celibacy.

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये।
मत्त एवेति तान्विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि॥ १२॥

ye caiva sāttvikā bhāvā rājasāstāmasāśca ye
matta eveti tānviddhi na tvahaṁ teṣu te mayi

Whatever other entities there are born of Sattva (the mode of goodness or purity), of Rajas (the mode of activity or passion) and Tamas (the mode of inertia or ignorance) know them all as evolved from Me; still neither I am in them, nor are they in Me. 12

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* Here the desire stands for the desire of the householders sanctioned by the scriptures rather than the desire which has been mentioned as the most sinful in the thirty-seventh verse of the third chapter.

Comment:

'Ye caiva sāttvikā bhāvā rājasās-tāmasāśca ye'—It means that in the entire universe all the Guṇas (attributes), things and actions evolve from God. He is the root, support, base and illuminator of all of them. Whatever singularity is seen in the entire universe, that is the Lord's. So a man should have inclination towards Him rather than towards the mode of goodness etc. This inclination towards God will lead him to emancipation while the inclination towards the mode of goodness etc., will lead to bondage.

Actually all the objects, attributes (modes) and actions are nothing else besides the manifestation of the Lord. Now a question arises when every action is a manifestation of the Lord, why is there sanction or prohibition? The answer is that the actions which are sactioned by the scriptures result in favourable and happy circumstances while the actions which are prohibited (forbidden) result in unfavourable and sad circumstances. So if a person performs forbidden actions, regarding them as manifestation of the Lord, the Lord as a result of those actions will manifest Himself in the form of inflictions and hells.

As far as actions are concerned, a striver should perform only those actions which are sanctioned by the ordinance of the scriptures. As far as acceptance (assumption) and knowledge are concerned, he should accept that God exists and he should know the Self or the world. By assuming the existence of God he should develop a keen desire to attain Him. He should try to please Him by obeying Him and by following His principles. He should also know that the bodies and the universe are kaleidoscopic and perishable and they are neither his nor for him. By knowing this fact he should cease attachment to them. By doing so he will come to know the reality. But even after knowing the fact that they are perishable, if a striver attaches importance to them, he will not be able to attain emancipation.

'Matta eveti tānviddhi'—All are evolved from the Lord viz; He is all. The cause and the effect—they seem distinct. But the effect has no separate and independent existence from the cause. Therefore the effect is the manifestation of the cause only. As in the ornaments made of gold there is nothing else besides gold, similarly the universe evolved from God is nothing else besides God.

By using the phrase 'Matta eva' Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that His lower Nature and higher Nature are not different from Him. As an appendix to the seventh chapter, in the ninth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, "Laying hold of My Nature I bring forth again and again all this multitude of beings" (9/8) and further He declares, "With Me as the supervisor, Nature brings forth the whole creation" (9/10). Actually both of the declarations are one and the same. In both the cases there is predominance of God. The same fact has been pointed out here in 7/6. "I am the source and the dissolution of the entire universe." While concluding it He declares, "Whatever entities there are born of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, know them all as evolved from Me."

The Lord having promised to declare the wisdom with Realization started the topic by mentioning that among thousands one scarcely knows Him in truth. Then having explained His higher and lower Natures He mentioned these Natures the source of all beings. Then He explained that He is the source of the universe (7/7). The same fact has been pointed out here while concluding the topic of His divine glories when He declares "Know that the Sattva (mode of goodness), the Rajas (mode of passion) and the Tamas (mode of ignorance) are evolved from Me."

'Na tvahaṁ teṣu te mayi'—"I am not in them and they are not in Me." It means that those attributes have no independent existence of their own besides the Lord. All the actions, objects are born and then they decay. If the Lord had been in them, with their decay He would have also decayed. But He never decays. It means that He is not in them. If they had

been in Him, they should have also been imperishable like Him. But it is not so, they perish while He is eternal. It means that they are not in Him. As a seed takes the shape of a tree with its branches, leaves, flowers etc., but it can't be perceived in them, similarly Nature constituted of the three categories (modes)—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas has its origin in Him, but He is not perceived in them. But actually there is nothing else besides Him.

As clouds evolve from ether, reside in ether and dissolve in ether but ether remains the same without any modification, all the divine glories described from the eighth verse upto this verse evolve from the Lord, reside in Him and dissolve in Him. But He is not in them and they are not in Him i.e., they are nothing else besides Him. There the Lord by pointing out this fact wants to warn the people that they should not be entangled in the worldly pleasures and prosperity because they are nothing else besides Him. So they should attach importance only to Him.

An Important Fact

All the entities born of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are born of God's Nature and as God and His Nature are one and the same, it means that they are born of God and they dissolve in Him. But the higher Nature (embodied soul) has accepted its affinity with Nature (Matter) viz., It has accepted it as its own and for its own—this is sustaining the world by the embodied soul and so it is born and it decays. In order to free the man from this bondage of birth and death Lord Kṛṣṇa declares that all the entities born of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are born of Him. Similarly, He declares in the tenth chapter, "These diverge feelings of creatures emanate from Me alone" (10/5) and "I am the source of all creation and everything in the world moves because of Me"(10/8). In the fifteenth chapter also He declares :

"Memory, wisdom and ratiocinative faculty emanate from Me"(15/15). When everything emanates from God, it means that man has no affinity for the attributes (modes). Therefore, if he does not accept his affinity for them, they can't lead him to bondage i.e., to the cycle of birth and death.

In the Gītā in the context of devotion also Lord Kṛṣṇa declares that He is all—"I am being and non-being both"(9/19) and Arjuna also says to Lord Kṛṣṇa, "You are being (existent) and non-being (non-existent) both and also beyond both of them" (11/37). Lord Kṛṣṇa also declares about a devotee having exclusive devotion "Such a devotee realizes that all this is God" (7/19). A devotee having exclusive devotion, like a chaste wife who beholds only her husband, and thinks of no other man beholds nothing else besides God.

In the Discipline of Knowledge the Lord declares the real and the unreal as separate entities. "The unreal has no existence and the real never ceases to be"(2/16). Similarly, Matter (Nature) spirit and Kṣetra (Field)—Kṣetrajña (knower of the Field) are described in the Gītā time and again as "Know Matter and spirit to be both without beginning" (13/19); "The knowledge of Kṣetra (Field or Matter) and Kṣetrajña (spirit) is true knowledge"(13/2); "Whatever being is born, the unmoving or the moving know it as emanated from the union of Kṣetra (Matter) and Kṣetrajña (spirit) (13/26); 'Kṣetrajña (the Lord of the Kṣetra viz; spirit) illumines the whole Kṣetra (Field or Matter) (13/33); "Those who perceive with the eye of wisdom this distinction between the Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña, reach the Supreme"(13/34). Thus by distinguishing the two the striver realizes that the self is unconnected with Matter and is totally untainted.

A striver should possess both devotion and knowledge. In the Discipline of Devotion there is predominance of devotion while knowledge is secondary. In the Discipline of Knowledge there is predominance of knowledge while devotion occupies the secondary place. In the Discipline of Devotion it is believed that all the entities (beings) born of Sattva. Rajas and Tamas evolve from Him (7/12) while in the Discipline of Knowledge it is

thought that the qualities (modes) of Sattva (Goodness), Rajas (Passion) and Tamas (Ignorance) are born of Prakṛti (Nature) (14/5). Both types of strivers accept that they are free from those qualities (modes) and both of them realize the same reality which can't be called either duel or non-duel, neither real nor unreal.

The strivers following the Discipline of Devotion having exclusive devotion identify them with God and thus become free from Matter, while the devotees following the Discipline of Knowledge by discriminating between the Matter and the spirit realize the self and thus become free from Matter.

Link:–Lord Kṛṣṇa in the twelfth verse said that the entities born of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are born of Him, still neither He is in them nor are they in Him. It means that God is free from Matter (Nature) and its evolutes. Similarly, the soul being an eternal portion of God is also free. But how is it bound? The answer comes.

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत्।
मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम्॥ १३॥

tribhirguṇamayairbhāvairebhiḥ sarvamidaṁ jagat
mohitaṁ nābhijānāti māmebhyaḥ paramavyayam

Deluded by these threefold dispositions of Nature, this world does not know Me, who am above them and imperishable. 13

Comment:

'Tribhirguṇamayairbhāvairebhiḥ... paramavyayam'—The three dispositions (modes) of Nature — Sattva, Rajas and Tamas evolve and dissolve. A man by identifying himself with those modes, thinks himself as Sāttvika, Rājasika or Tāmasika. Being deluded by them he cannot deem that he is an eternal fragment of God. Losing sight of this eternal affinity with God, he acceptes his affinity with transitory mental modifications—this is his delusion.

The term 'Jagat' (world) here denotes 'embodied soul.' The spirit (soul) because of its identity with the kaleidoscopic body is called 'Jagat' (world). It accepts the body's birth, death, health and sickness etc., as its own. So long as it continues to accept its identity with the body, it will remain the world i.e., it will go on following the cycle of birth and death without living permanently anywhere.

Men are deluded because they accept separate entities of the three modes of Nature besides God. If they accept them as Divine manifestation, they can't be deluded.

Delusion arises out of either of the assumptions-regard the body as yours or accept yourself as body's. Acceptance of the body as yours is 'mineness' while acceptance that the self is body is egoism. This affinity of egoism and 'mineness' is called delusion. It is because of delusion that a man can't know the reality about God. This is a rule that a man can know the world by isolating himself from it and he can know God by identifying himself with Him, because he is totally different from the body but one with God.

Our affinity with God is spontaneous because we are His eternal fragment but our affinity with the body and the world is self-made and artificial. But we accept this affinity as contrary to the real and that is our delusion.

Now there is a question whether first the man turned aside from God or got deluded by the three modes of Nature. The philosophers are of the opinion that both of them have been there from times immemorial, they are beginningless. Therefore it can't be said which of them is former and which is latter. The man should make

the right use of the freedom given to him by God. By doing so he can transcend the three modes of Nature and be free from the cycle of birth and death. This proves that by misusing his freedom and being entangled in sensual ephemeral pleasures he can't realize God.

By the term 'Paramavyayam' Lord Kṛṣṇa says that He is above the threefold dispositions of Nature i.e., He is unconnected and free from them, there is no modification in Him. Moreover, He is imperishable. But the man deluded by the modes of Nature can't know His real self.

Link:–Now in the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains why a man does not know Him and how he can know Him.

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते॥ १४॥

daivī hyeṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā
māmeva ye prapadyante māyāmetāṁ taranti te

This Divine illusion of Mine consisting of the three Guṇas (modes of Nature) is hard to surmount; however; those who take refuge in Me alone cross it. 14

Comment:

'Daivī hyeṣā guṇamayī* mama māyā duratyayā'—The Divine illusion of the Lord consisting of the three modes of Nature—Sattva, Raja and Tama is extremely difficult to surmount. The people because of the desire of pleasures and prosperity can't be free from this illusion. Because of their attachment for the world including the body and its pleasure and pain etc., they get entangled in them. This Divine illusion is hard to surmount when they accept independent existence of the modes of Nature. If they don't accept their separate entity besides God, they will surmount this Divine illusion.

'Māmeva ye prapadyante māyāmetāṁ taranti te'—Those who take refuge in Me alone cross over this illusion because they instead of beholding the three modes of Nature behold Me only. As has already been described, these three modes of Nature are neither in Me nor am I in them. I perform all actions without having the least attachment. Thus those who know this reality, don't get entangled in the three modes and cross over this illusion. They don't depend on mind and intellect etc., because they know that mind and intellect etc., also belong to Nature (Matter) which is perishing every moment. So they have a disinclination towards Matter and inclination towards Me because they know that the soul is an eternal fragment of Mine.

Lord Kṛṣṇa by using the terms 'Māmeva' means to say that they take refuge only in Him because they don't accept any other existence besides Him. Thus those who without depending on money, material and men etc., take refuge in Him only i.e., depend on Him only cross over this illusion.

The senses, body, mind, intellect and worldly possessions belong to the Lord and therefore, they are to be used in the service of the Lord without any selfish motive. If we don't do so, we are dishonest and we

* Lord Kṛṣṇa in the twelfth verse has declared that the three modes of goodness, of passion and of ignorance proceed from Him. The same fact has been pointed out here when the Lord declares that His illusion consisting of the three modes is divine. The term 'Esā' stands for the threefold modes of nature by which the world is deluded as has been described in the thirteenth verse.

The Divine illusion has been called to be consisting of the three modes because this illusion in the form of the modes of Nature is the evolute of Nature. These are the modes rather than Nature (Prakṛti) which bind the man (soul).

don't perform our duty. But if we use it in His service, He gets pleased and by His grace we cross over the illusion.

Actually all the things have been given to us by God. But we feel proud of them by thinking them as our own. This is an error. God is so gracious and generous that He gives the things in such a unique way that He does not show that they have been given by Him. So we accept them as our own. Only devotees can realize His grace and generosity. But those who have disinclination for Him can't realize that all the things have been bestowed upon them by God by His grace and they can't possess them for ever. So they can't have an exclusive devotion for God.

This verse means that those who take refuge in Him i.e., those who possess the divine traits cross His Divine illusion. But those who take refuge in gods i.e., those who possess demoniacal traits—attaching importance to body and pleasures etc., can't cross His Divine illusion. Such persons possessing demoniacal traits have to return, even though they may gain the world of Brahmā, they have to follow the cycle of birth and death.

Link:–In the previous verse Lord Kṛṣṇa said, "Those who take refuge in me alone cross the Divine illusion of Mine." Then why do all creatures not take refuge in Him? The answer comes.

न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढाः प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः ।
माययापहृतज्ञाना आसुरं भावमाश्रिताः ॥ १५ ॥

na māṁ duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ prapadyante narādhamāḥ
māyayāpahṛtajñānā āsuraṁ bhāvamāśritāḥ

The evil-doers, the deluded, the lowest of men, deprived of discrimination (wisdom), having embraced the demoniac nature do not take refuge in Me. 15

Comment:

'Na māṁ duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ prapadyante narādhamāḥ'—Those who are evil doers and deluded do not take refuge in Him. Evil doers are those who have attachment for the acquired worldly kaleidoscopic things and who have desire to get the unacquired ones. Fulfilment of desires leads to greed and obstacle to fulfilment of desires leads to anger. Thus those who because of their desire enjoy the sensual pleasures against the ordinance of the scriptures, because of greed, commit sins such as falsehood, fraud, betrayal and dishonesty etc., and because of anger have the feelings of envy, jealousy and enmity and commit violence, are evil doers.

Desire evolves when a man attaches importance to any worldly entity. This desire leads a man to delusion and he thinks that he should enjoy the worldly pleasures and should live alive. Thus he instead of seeking refuge in God seeks refuge in the perishable things and objects etc., owing to the pre-ponderance of the mode of ignorance.

The men are deluded because they can't discriminate between the real and the unreal, the imperishable and the perishable, the improper and the proper etc., and they are disinclined towards God. Such evil doers and deluded ones can't have a resolve for spirituality, then how can they take refuge in Him?

Those evil doers and deluded ones are the lowest of men. They are lower than even animals because animals follow the rules of nature while they don't follow. Moreover, animals while suffering the fruit of their previous actions are going towards the human life, whereas, human beings by having this body (bestowed upon them for God-Realization) by doing sins and injustice are following the path which leads to hells and animal life. Lord Kṛṣṇa has declared about such people (Gītā 16/19-20) "I repeatedly throw those evil, cruel, haters,

vilest among men into demoniacal wombs. Thus cast into demoniacal wombs they sink into still lower depths."

'Māyayāpahṛtajñānā āsuraṁ bhāvamāśritāḥ'—Deluded by the wonderful illusion of the Lord consisting of the three modes of Nature (7/14) possessing the demoniacal traits viz., busy with bringing up senses, body and mind etc., such people have total disinclination for Him and thus can't seek refuge in Him. Secondly, such people are so much deprived of discrimination that they can't perceive the perishable nature of the worldly things and so they hanker after prosperity, pleasure praise etc. They consider it their chivalry and success and think that there is no aim of life besides them. So they can't perceive the reality about the world that it is perishable. They have no connection with it.

The term 'Asu' stands for vital force (Prāṇa). In spite of perceiving the bodies as active and perishable they are ever engaged in nourishing them. They attach importance only to the mundane objects which are necessary for the maintenance of their life. They attach more value to money than to necessities of life. Money is not usable in itself. It is useful through commodities. They attach importance not only to money but to its quantum. The quantum enhances pride which is a demonic trait which leads to all afflictions and sins.*

An Important Fact

Here Lord Kṛsṇa has declared that evil doers don't seek refuge in Him while in the thirtieth verse of the ninth chapter He declares that even if the vilest sinner worships Him with exclusive devotion, he should be considered a saint and he secures lasting peace. How? The answer is that the vilest sinner has no natural inclination to God, but if his unfavourable circumstances or grace of saints or any virtuous action of the past compels him to take refuge in Him, he becomes a saint because God is equanimous to all without having any hatred or liking (Gītā 9/29). He equally showers His blessings upon all creatures whether they are vile or virtuous.

In fact a vile person is more deserving as far as God's grace is concerned because he thinks that he has no virtue. As a mother loves all her sons equally, the Lord's heart is naturally gracious to all beings. The Lord, the mother of all ages loves all the creatures equally. Therefore, if a man seeks refuge in Him, the Lords' heart melts with a great compassion and He instead of thinking of his past errors thinks of what he has in his heart now (Mānasa 1/29/3).

It has been declared by Him in the Rāmacaritamānasa that a man having envy,but finding himself helpless in the world, takes refuge in God, He by His grace without paying any heed to his pride, delusion, fraud and deception etc., makes him a saint very quickly (5/48/1-2).

A rigthteous man depends on his righteousness and so does not depend on God exclusively, while a vile person without having any support depends on the Lord exclusively and therefore the Lord's heart melts and thus the vile person becomes a saint. Moreover, the nature of evil doers does not allow them to take refuge in Him. But if any one some how or the other takes refuge in Him, He is ever prepared to embrace him. Therefore, in the two contexts there is no contradiction but God's grace is revealed in both of them.

The virtuous and vile are not those who perform virtuous and vile actions. But virtuous are those who have inclination for God while vile are those who have disinclination for Him. Though performance of actions such as oblation, charity, penance, pilgrimage, fast, is good but when they are performed for their fruit, they are not so valuable as is the inclination for God because God's grace enables a man to become pious very quickly and that piousness is far superior to the piety gained through virtuous actions. Therefore when a man being helpless and disappointed from all quarters calls the Almighty, His heart melts and enables him to become a loving devotee to Him.

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* Pride is the root of the world which is in the form of birth and death and it causes innumerable kinds of offlictions and miseries. (Mānasa 7/74/3)

The feelings of the heart are more important than the actions performed with the body while exclusive devotion of one's own self is far superior to the feelings. No evils can stand where there is exclusive devotion. It is this exclusive devotion which enables a man to become pious very quickly because the spirit being an eternal portion of the Lord is pious. It is because of his sins and ill-feelings that he has become impious.

Link:–In the previous verse Lord Kṛsna declared "The evil doers having embraced the demoniac nature don't take refuge in Me." Then who take refuge in Him? It is delineated in the next verse.

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ।। १६ ।।

caturvidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukṛtino'rjuna
ārto jijñāsurarthārthī jñānī ca bharatarṣabh

Four types of virtuous men worship Me, O Arjuna; the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of wealth and the man of wisdom. 16

Comment:

'Caturvidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukṛtino' rjuna' —There are four types of virtuous men (devotees) who worship God viz., seek refuge in Him. In the preceding verse the Lord talked of the evil doers while here He is talking of the virtuous. These virtuous men don't perform actions for their fruit but for God by having affinity for Him. They are of two types. First are those who perform oblation, charity and penance etc., and other actions according to their caste and creed etc., in accordance with the ordinance of the scriptures for God, while the second ones are those who have constant remembrance of God, loud chanting and are engaged in narrating or listening to the stories of the drama of the Lord's human life.

Those who are inclined towards God are fortunate and virtuous and deserve to be called human beings. Their inclination might have evolved either from the virtuous actions of the past or their helplessness or their thoughtfulness or good company or study of the sacred books etc. Inclination towards Him is prosperity and disinclination for Him is adversity (Mānasa 5/32/2).

God has bestowed upon man this human body so that he may realize God. The man is independent in realizing Him. Therefore, if a man by making proper use of this body, by giving up actions which are not sanctioned by the scriptures, is engaged in God-Realization, he can attain Him easily. But if he does not make proper use of his independence and does the contrary, he paves the way to hells and eighty-four lac forms of life. Thus only the persons who are engaged in adoration of the Lord are virtuous and they deserve to be called men.

'Ārto jijñāsurarthārthī jñānī ca bharatarṣabha'—The distressed (sufferer), the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of wealth and the man of wisdom — all the four types of virtuous men worship God viz., seek refuge in Him.

(1) The seeker of wealth —The devotees who seek wealth only from God are the seeker of wealth. They worship God to gain wealth. Their conviction is that none else besides God can fulfil their desire for wealth. Holding this view they recite and chant God's name and adore Him scrupulously forgetting riches.

One who resorts to worldly means for fulfilling his desire for wealth but sometimes invokes God for it, is not a devotee to God, he is a devotee to riches.

But the devotees of God seek wealth only from Him. Such devotees gradually develop inclination for God, and their desire for

wealth diminishes and finally it disappears. Dhruva was such a devotee.

One day Dhruva wanted to sit on the lap of his father but his step mother did not allow him to sit there. She said, "You have not worshipped God. You are unlucky because you are the son of your unlucky mother. So you don't deserve to sit on the lap of your father." Dhruva narrated the incident to his mother. His mother said, "My darling, she is right. Both of us have not worshipped God." Dhruva said, "Mother, now I am going to adore God." Saying these words Dhruva made for the jungle for adoration. On the way he met sage Nārada. Nārada said to him, "O innocent boy, where are you going all alone? In the jungle there are wild animals which will devour you. Come with me to the king. He on my request will make arrangement for your mother as well as for you." Having listened to Nārada, his faith in God was intensified and he said, "Sire, I want to be engaged in adoration." Having heard his determination sage Nārada imparted him the sacred text of twelve letters (Oṁ Namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya) and by telling him to meditate on four-armed Lord Viṣṇu, ordered him to go to the Madhuvana for adoration.

Dhruva worshipped the Lord with such a firm belief that the Lord revealed Himself before Dhruva within six months. The Lord granted him the boon that he would become an heir to the throne but Dhruva was not pleased with this boon. His mind was purified by adoration and so he felt ashamed that he committed a mistake in having a desire to gain kingdom. It means that Dhruva wanted to gain kingdom but not by any other means besides devotion and adoration. By means of adoration he gained kingdom and his desire perished. Thus a seeker of wealth seeks wealth only from God.

Now-a-days people who want to earn money by foul means sometimes pray to God to grant them money. Such people are seekers of wealth but they are not devotees of God because instead of believing Him they believe in falsehood, fraud and other foul means while the devotees depend on God only and by having affinity for Him adore Him only. Such devotees because of any factor such as past-influence etc., sometimes desire for favourable circumstances. They are the devotees, no doubt. But due to this desire they are called the seekers of wealth.

(2) The Distressed (sufferer) devotees—Such type of devotees pray to God in adversity. They pray only to God to do away with their miseries and misfortunes. Such type of distressed devotee was Uttarā* because she did not seek refuge in any one else except the Lord to get rid of troubles†.

Those who by having affinity with God depend on Him only and do not desire for favourable circumstances but sometimes the desire itself evolves in them to be free from suffering. Such devotees are the distressed ones.

(3) Devotees, the seekers of knowledge—The devotees who want to know the self and the reality, depend only on God having exclusive devotion for Him. Uddhava can be named among such devotees. Lord Kṛṣṇa imparted to him divine knowledge which is known as 'Uddhava Gītā' (Śrīmadbhāgavata 11/7—30).

Those, who having affinity for God are engrossed in adoration of God but sometimes because of company or pastinfluences want to know the self or divinity, are also called seekers of knowledge.

(4) The men of wisdom—The term 'Ca' has been used to show the superiority of

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* The examples of Draupadī and Gajendra (the elephant) are not befitting because they adopted other means to be free from suffering. Draupadī sought help from others and also used her power to do away with her suffering. Similarly, the elephant also sought the help of other male and female elephants and also used his power. Thus both of them went on suffering. But as soon as both of them sought refuge only in God, they were relieved of their sufferings.

† O Lord of the gods, Master of the world, the great Yogī protect me from the burning iron-arrow which is moving quickly towards me. O Omnipotent, there is none besides You in the world who can protect me because all the people are killing each other. O Lord, it will not make much difference if this red-hot arrow burns me but it should not destroy the fruit of my womb.

the men of wisdom to other three types of virtuous men. The devotees, who neither have a desire for favourable circumstances nor are worried about the unfavourable ones nor have a desire to know the self but by depending on God, are engrossed in divine devotion, are called men of wisdom. They perceive the desirable and undesirable circumstances as sports of God. They ever remain engrossed in His devotion without having a desire in the least. The Gopīs whose happiness was nothing besides Lord Kṛṣṇa's happiness can be named among such devotees.

Here a fact needs attention that the distressed, the seekers of wealth and the seekers of knowledge who adore the Lord, devotion for God is aroused in them and they are called devotees. But those who seek knowledge, wealth and freedom from suffering by any other means have no affinity for God and so devotion is not aroused in them and they can't be called devotees.

Saint's utterances affirm that it is God alone who loves His dovotees, where as devotees merely surrender themselves to God. It is so because he alone is qualified to be a true lover who does not expect anything from others. A devotee has only affinity for God. God actually surrenders Himself to all His creatures. When a devotee surrenders himself to God without having a desire in the least, he is called a man of wisdom viz., a devout devotee. In that case he has no separate entity, he becomes one with God viz., there is only God's entity.

An Exceptional Fact

(1)

Four boys were playing. Just then their father came with four mangoes. At the sight of the mangoes one of the sons asked for a mango, the second wept for a mango. Both of them were given a mango each. The third one only looked at the mangoes and the fourth one went on playing without even having a look at the mangoes. The father gave one mango to each of the other two boys also. Here the boy who asked for the mango is the seeker of wealth, the one who wept is distressed, the one who looked at the mango is seeker of knowledge and the fourth one is the man of wisdom. The seeker of wealth seeks favourable (desireable) circumstances, the sufferer seeks to do away with suffering, the seeker of knowledge wants to know God, while the wise (devout devotee) seeks nothing.

All the above mentioned men are virtuous because they depend on God predominantly. So they are different from men who have fallen from Yoga (Gītā 6/41-42). Similarly the seekers of wealth and distressed devotees are different from those selfish persons who perform actions for their fruit because their wisdom has been carried away by various desires (Gītā 7/20), so they are included among men of demoniacal traits. Among the devotees such as seekers of wealth etc., the degree of superiority or inferiority in their devotion is due to desire. In spite of desire, they are not 'Hṛtajñānāḥ' viz., their wisdom has not been carried away. Rather the Lord has called them noble (7/18) and virtuous and thus has praised them.

Those who seek refuge in the Lord may desire fruit for their actions but there is predominance of devotion for God in them. So the more intimacy they develop for the Lord, the less fruit-seekers they become and then they become unique. So the Lord has called them noble and declared the man of wisdom verily His own self (7/18).

(2)

Acceptance of affinity with God is the best means to attain Him. This affinity wipes out all evils and defects. Moreover the Lord has not an eye on defects but He perceives affinity. All the creatures are His but it is an error on their part that by forgetting the real affinity they have accepted their affinity with the world. As soon as this error is rectified, they attain Him. In having this affinity a devotee need not resort to mind and intellect etc. While in other means he has to take their help.

Even the vilest creatures are His. So He, as mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of the Gītā, throws them into demoniacal wombs so that they may be purified. The Lord, like a mother who does not consult a child while bathing him, does not consult the creatures because He wants to purify them.

A devotee has real affinity for God but sometimes he has a desire. In that case there is predominance of affinity while desire occupies a secondary place. Such devotees hold the first position.

The second type of devotees are those who want their desires to be satisfied by other worldly people. But when they are not satisfied, they pray to God. Because of the lack of exclusive devotion they hold the second position.

The third type is those who have affinity with God so that their desires may be fulfilled. In this case there is predominance of desire while affinity with God occupies a subsidiary place.

A Vital Fact

Desire is of two types—spiritual and mundane.

(i) Spiritual desire—It is of two kinds for salvation and for exclusive devotion.

In the desire for salvation there is desire to know the self or reality. So it is not desire, it is need or want. The need is that which is positively satiated and with its satiation no other need is born*. Need means lack of something necessary and this need is for God-Realization.

The second kind of desire is for exclusive devotion in which a devotee surrenders himself to God because he himself is His fragment†.

Thus the desires mentioned above are not really desires.

(ii) Mundane desire—It is also of two kinds—the desire to get pleasures and the desire to get rid of pains. Desires for comforts, luxuries, name, fame and pleasures etc., here and hereafter are such that they lead a man to bondage and degradation. They are demoniacal traits which should be renounced.

The second type of desire is to do away with pain. The pain can be caused by fate such as flood, drought etc., which is known as 'Ādhidaivika' or by creatures such as lions, snakes and thieves etc., which is known as 'Ādhibhautika, or it can be pertaining to mind and body etc., such as worry, fear, lunacy and diseases etc., which is called Ādhyātmika.'‡

Actually the mundane desires are never satisfied because if one is satisfied, another evolves and the process continues.

Link:–Among the four kinds of virtuous men the man of wisdom is the best. It is described in the next verse.

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥ १७ ॥

teṣāṁ jñānī nityayukta ekabhaktirviśiṣyate
priyo hi jñānino'tyarthamahaṁ sa ca mama priyaḥ

Of these the best is the man of wisdom ever steadfast and exclusively devoted to Me; for extremely dear am I to the wise and he is extremely dear to Me. 17

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* A desire is never satisfied. One desire gives birth to other desires. As a man has desire for a certain amount of money. When he gains it, he desires more and thus his desire for money is never satisfied. Similar is the case with other perishable worldly things such as pleasures, praise, health and family etc. Thus desires should be renounced because they are never satisfied . Moreover these desires for the perishable have an access to the body and the name, not to the self. So they are not yours.

† The desire for exclusive devotion for God is superior to the desire for salvation; because in salvation he has a desire to get something, he wants to attain salvation but in exclusive devotion he wants to surrender himself to God, he gives himself to God. In salvation there remains ego in its subtle form while in devotion there is no ego.

‡ The 'Ādhyātmika' pain is of two kinds —'Ādhi' and 'Vyādhi'. Worry is known as 'Ādhi' and physical disease is known as 'Vyādhi'. Ādhi is of two kinds — (i) Lunacy (2) Worry, sadness, fear and agitation etc. Lunacy is the result of the actions of the past while worry and sadness are the results of ignorance. When a man possesses knowledge his worry and sadness are wiped out but he may suffer from lunacy as the fruit of his past actions.

Comment:

'Teṣāṁ jñānī nityayukta'—Among the four kinds of virtuous men the man of wisdom is the best because he is steadfast viz., he is constantly established in God. He thinks of nothing besides God. As the cowherdesses while milking cows, churning curd and discharging other domestic duties thought only of God *, the man of wisdom while performing all the mundane and spiritual actions is attached to God alone.

'Ekabhaktirviśiṣyate'—The man of wisdom without having any desire of his own has an exclusive devotion for God. So he is the best one.

Though all the four kinds of virtuous men are engaged in God's devotion, yet the first three have no exclusive devotion because they have some desire or the other of their own. The seeker of wealth seeks favourable circumstances, the sufferer seeks to do away with unfavourable circumstances, the seeker of knowledge has a desire to know his self or Divinity. But the man of wisdom (devout devotee) has exclusive devotion for God without having any desire of his own.

'Priyo hi jñānino'tyarthamahaṁ sa ca mama priyaḥ'—I am extremely dear to the wise because he has exclusive devotion for Me without having any desire of his own. Therefore, he is extremely dear to Me.

Though all the creatures being fragment of God are naturally dear to Him and He brings up all of them without any partiality, yet those who have an inclination for Him become especially dear to Him.

When a devotee becomes free from desires, axiomatic devotion (love) is aroused in Him. This love neither ends nor lessens but increases every moment and is limitless, endless and perfect.

Link:–In the previous verse Lord Kṛṣṇa declared the man of wisdom to be the best of all the four. The other three are also not undervalued by Him. So He declares in the next verse.

उदाराः सर्व एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम्।
आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम्॥ १८॥

udārāḥ sarva evaite jñānī tvātmaiva me matam
āsthitaḥ sa hi yuktātmā māmevānuttamāṁ gatim

All these are noble, but the man of wisdom is verily My own self; this is My view. For this devotee who is steadfast in mind, is established in Me alone, as the supreme goal. 18

Comment:

'Udārāḥ sarva evaite'—All these are noble. The term 'Udārāḥ' (noble) has several interpretations—

(1)

In the eleventh verse of the fourth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, "How so ever men approach Me, even so do I seek them." A devotee likes God and so does God like a devotee. But a devotee is noble because he accepts his affinity and surrenders himself first to God. He does not bother whether God calls him His own or not.

(2)

The devotees of the gods perform oblation, charity, penance etc., following the

* The Gopīs of Vraja who, while milking cows, separating rice from paddy, churning curd, smearing the courtyard with cow-dung, rocking babies in cradles, lulling a baby to sleep, watering the basil and sweeping the house, sang the divine songs of Lord Kṛṣṇa's life-story with full devotion in an ecstasy of delight with their minds constantly attached to Him are virtuous and deserve congratulations.

rules for fruits. The gods grant them boons as desired by the devotees without thinking of the welfare of the devotees. But God grants only the boons which are for their welfare and which enhance their devotion. He does not grant such boons by which their devotion is not enhanced and they may be entangled in the world because He is the supreme father and greatest well-wisher. So the devotees of God worship Him not caring whether their desires are satisfied or not. Thus they are noble.

(3)

The worldly pleasures and prosperity obviously seem pleasant while adoration does not seem to bear immediate fruit, yet devotees adore the Lord without caring for pleasures and prosperity. So they are noble.

(4)

One who wants anything from God is called noble. It is so because God Himself is very much noble and He regards one who wants anything from Him as noble.

(5)

The devotees with an exclusive devotion want their mundane as well as spiritual desires to be satisfied only by God. Because of their exclusive devotion they are noble.

'Jñānī tvātmaiva me matam'—The other three devotees are noble but the man of wisdom is the Lord's own manifestation and so is naturally loving to Him. The self is naturally loving to everyone. It knows no motive or cause. So the term 'Tu' (but) denotes singularity of the man of wisdom.

In divine love the lover surrenders himself to his Beloved and identifies himself with Him. Similarly, the Beloved also surrenders Himself to His lover. So they identify themselves with each other. This union in the Discipline of Knowledge remains calm and constant. But in the Discipline of Devotion (Love) it increases every moment and in it the lover and the Beloved even having separate entities are one and in spite of being identified with each other are two. This love can't be expressed in words. In this divine love affair even in seemingly separation there is constant union while in union naturally there is union. But the body is always different from us whether we accept it as separate from us or one with us.

When a river flows into the sea, both of them become one. But sometimes the river flows towards the sea and sometimes the sea flows towards the river. Similar is the case in the divine love of the lover and the Beloved. This drama of divine love between the lover and the Beloved continues for infinite years in infinite forms. There develops such an intense love between the two that it becomes difficult to know who is the lover and who is the Beloved. Both of them are Beloved and both of them are lovers.

'Āsthitaḥ sa hi yuktātmā māmevānuttamāṁ gatim'—The man of wisdom by being steadfast in mind remains established in God who is the supreme and above whom there is none. Such a devotee remaining unaffected by favourable or unfavourable circumstances is always absorbed in Him. He has a firm belief that only God is his and that affinity is enhanced in both desirable and undesirable circumstances. Thus he remains firmly established in Him.

Link:—In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa describes the man of wisdom as mentioned in the previous verse and indicates the kind of devotion he has.

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते ।
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥ १९ ॥

bahūnāṁ janmanāmante jñānavānmāṁ prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvamiti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ

In the very last of all births viz; in this human birth, the man of wisdom takes refuge in Me, realizing that all this is God. Such a great soul is very rare indeed. 19

Comment:

'Bahūnām janmanāmante'—This human birth is the last of all births. The Lord has given man full right to be free from the cycle of birth and death. But he because of his attachment for the world, failing to attain Him, returns to the path of the mortal world (Gītā 9/3). So Lord Kṛṣṇa while describing the men possessing demoniacal traits declares that such fools instead of attaining Him sink into still lower and baser depths (Gītā 16/20).

It is mentioned in the scriptures and the utterances of saints that the only aim of human life is to attain salvation, it is not for enjoying the pleasures of the world and heaven. Therefore, in the Gītā such people who look upon heaven as the supreme goal are called unwise (2/42) and of meagre intelligence (7/23).

This human life is the very first and the very last of all births. It is the first because the actions performed during this human life lead him to eighty-four lac forms of lives and hells and in these forms of lives and hells he has to suffer pains and tortures because of the vices he committed in the course of human life. It is the very last because a man can attain salvation or God-Realization and be free from the cycle of birth and death.

Lord Kṛṣṇa in the sixth verse of the eighth chapter declares, "Whatever being a man thinks of when he leaves his body at the time of death, that alone does he attain". Therefore, the Lord has given him independence to think of the Lord and attain salvation. Thus the Gītā declares openly, "Even the vilest sinner and those who are of inferior birth because of their sins of the previous birth, by taking refuge in Me attain the Supreme Goal" (9/30—33). The Lord has used the terms 'Pāpa yonayaḥ (born of the sinful womb). It means that creatures of the inferior birth such as pariah, animals, birds, insects, trees and creepers etc., all can be included. But the difference between man and creatures of inferior births is that man because of his discrimination can follow the spiritual path while other creatures can't. But being fragments of God, all of them have got the right to attain Him. Yet many of the creatures because of God's and saints' grace as well as the influence of the place of pilgrimage etc., attain salvation. The gods hanker after pleasures in heaven. So they don't think of their salvation. But if they also think of God-Realization due to any circumstances, they can realize Him. It is mentioned in the scriptures that Indra, the king of the gods had true knowledge. The Lord has bestowed this human life, the very last of all births upon us so that we may attain salvation. So if we just become instrument and be a yesman to His will, we can attain salvation undoubtedly.

A man should not misuse the independence given to him by God by working against the ordinance of the scriptures and against his own discrimination. In that state of the right use of independence either he will do nothing or act according to the ordinance of the scriptures. If he has no interest for doing anything for himself, he will cease his affinity with senses, mind and intellect etc. The reason is that when he has desire to do something, the sense of doership is born and he has affinity with senses and mind. He has affinity with the fruit of action when he does for himself. When he does nothing, there will neither be the sense of doership nor desire for fruit and thus he will be established in the self. If he works according to the ordinance of the scriptures without expecting the fruit of actions the momentum for actions perishes and his affinity with actions and things breaks off and then new desires don't evolve and old attachment perishes. Thus he realizes knowledge in the self in the course of time (Gītā 4/38).

Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Gītā declares—One who works without having any desire for the fruit of actions, all his actions melt away

(4/23). One will cross over all sins by the raft of knowledge (4/36). The Lord liberates His devotees from all sins (18/66). He who knows God as unborn and beginningless, is purged of all sins (10/3). In this way a devotee is purged of all sins by all the three Disciplines of Action, Knowledge and Devotion. It means that the aim of human birth, the very last of all birth is nothing besides salvation.

We have got good company, sacred books such as the Gītā, and realized the importance of the name of the Lord, it means that God by His special grace has given us an opportunity to attain salvation. But it does not mean that we should stop adoration etc. We should devote our time and energy to attain Him by becoming an instrument in His hands. If He had not decided to liberate us from the cycle of birth and death, He by His grace would not have bestowed this human birth upon us (whose only aim is to attain God-Realization). So with the firm faith that we'll attain salvation, we should follow the spiritual path by becoming an instrument in His hands.

A question may rise that this human birth may be the fruit of the virtuous actions of his previous birth. If we accept this assumption we come to know that even animals, birds and insects etc., also get the fruit of their previous actions. If it were so, there would be no difference between men and other creatures. In that case it would not be correct to say that the human life has been bestowed upon us by the kind grace of God. Then how can we regard human life unique and glorious ? The glory of human life lies in surrendering ourselves to God and attaining salvation.*

'Vāsudevaḥ sarvam'—In the beginning of the universe God Himself assumes different forms and at the time of its dissolution only God remains. Thus when at the beginning and the end there is none besides God, how can someone else be besides God in the middle? The creation has evolved out of Himself only. There was no other material with Him besides Him. Therefore, the whole universe is nothing besides His manifestation.

As in the ornaments made of gold there is nothing besides gold, in the earthenware vessels there is nothing besides clay and in the toys made of sugar there is nothing besides sugar, in the universe there is nothing besides God. So long as a man is preoccupied with the beauty and forms of ornaments, he does not pay attention to the purity of gold. Similarly, so long as a man attaches importance to the world, he does not behold God, he does not perceive that "All is God."

The Yogī identified with Brahma attains the Beatitude of Brahma (5/24); the Yogī who has become one with Brahma gains Supreme Bliss (6/27); and knowing the Lord in essence he enters into Him (18/54-55). According to the Gītā the above mentioned are the three states which change. But 'All is God' is not a state, this is reality in which there is never any change. Whatever appears as the world is nothing besides God. The Lord Himself declares—

"Whatever is perceived with mind, tongue, eyes and other sense-organs is nothing besides Me. There is no entity besides Me. Understand this fact carefully". (Śrīmadbhā. 11/13/24). Thus according to His declaration a man of wisdom (viz., the follower of divine love) sees the Lord everywhere "He sees Me present in all beings and all beings existing in Me"(6/30). "He (the Yogī), though engaged in all forms of activities, dwells in Me" (6/31).

If a person gets the thing desired he feels very happy. Thus we may very well imagine how happy the devotee must feel who

* (1) After several births, in this human body, which one gets after a great industry and which in spite of being transient is very difficult to get, the wise man should try his best to attain salvation as quickly as possible before he dies. The sensual pleasures can be enjoyed in all births, so a man should not spoil this precious life in them (Śrīmadbhāgavata 11/9/29).
(2) This human body is the root of all good fruits and has been bestowed upon men by divine grace, in spite of being rare. This is a strong boat to cross the ocean of the world sailed by the preceptor-sailor and I (God) work as favourable wind to row it. In spite of so many facilities, if a man does not cross this ocean, he is the murderer of his own self.
(Śrīmadbhāgavata 11/20/17)

beholds God in everything. Overwhelmed with joy the devotee of God while describing the name, qualities, influence and play of the Lord and remembering them time and again laughs, weeps, dances, sings aloud and becomes calm and quiet and thus sanctifies the entire universe. Thus he becomes full to the brim with divine bliss and then for him nothing remains to be done, to be known and to be received.

For such a devotee following the Discipline of Devotion the so-called world becomes spiritual. Being absorbed in God the body of a devotee also becomes unearthly or spiritual as Mīrābāī's body merged into God's body. In devotion towards the Lord first there are three different entities—service, servant (devotee) and master (God). But when there is full devotion, the devotee in the form of service merges into the master and only the master (God) remains. Such devotees who are ever engrossed in devotion to God leave an indelible impression upon creatures by their presence, touch and talk etc.

So long as men have a desire to enjoy sensual pleasures, they can't realize reality about the world. But when this desire is renounced, they perceive the world as the manifestation of the Lord.

A Vital Fact

'Vāsudevaḥ Sarvam'—The Divinity can be understood in two ways—(1) The world has no existence, only God exists (2) All is God viz., this world is the manifestation of God.

Strivers can follow either of the two ways. Those who are attached to the world should follow the first path while those who are totally detached from the world and are engaged in meditation and adoration etc., should follow the second path. Though both are one and the same yet there seems to be difference in them in the same way as there seems to be difference in different kinds of ornaments of gold and the gold itself. In the former there is predominance of discrimination while in the latter there is predominance of devotion (faith). The devotees who worship attributeless God attach importance to discrimination while those who worship the Lord with attributes attach importance to devotion.

But in fact both of them are the same. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Discipline of Knowledge has used acceptance in the sense of knowledge (3/28) while in the Discipline of Devotion He has used knowledge in the sense of acceptance (5/29; 9/13; 10/3,7,24,27,41). Here there is one point which needs attention—To know God or to accept Him is knowledge, while to know the world as having separate existence besides the Lord or to accept it as such, is ignorance.

By knowing the reality about the world, the world loses its existence and by knowing the reality about God, one realizes Him. Similarly, by accepting firmly that the world is the manifestation of the Lord, the world is seen as divine manifestation. Thus by realizing the reality, knowledge and faith become one.

'Iti jñānavān mām prapadyate'—Those who accept the existence of the kaleidoscopic world are ignorant and foolish while those who understand that the Lord pervades everywhere in different forms are learned and wise. Only the Lord is at all places, in all beings and in all forms—this is realization of a wise devotee. Therefore in the nineteenth verse of the fifteenth chapter he has been called 'Sarvavit' viz., he has known all what was to be known.

The surrender of the man of wisdom is different from that of the sufferer, the seeker of knowledge and the seeker of wealth. So the Lord has called him His own self (7/18) because according to him there is no other entity besides the Lord. The Lord Himself declares 'Like clusters of Yarn-beads formed by knots on a thread, all this is threaded on Me'(7/7). As in a rosary made of yarn-beads there is nothing besides yarn, in the world there is nothing besides God. One who realizes this fact is said to take refuge in Him. This realization of the fact

is real surrender to Him.

'Sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ'—Some of the people never think of God-Realization. A few think of it but they have no exclusive devotion for Him. A few make efforts but soon lose heart because of their ignorance in realizing Him. They miss this best opportunity and thus are deprived of the highest gain.

The Lord Himself in the third verse of this chapter declared, "Among thousands of men scarcely one strives to realize Me and of those who strive, scarcely one knows Me in truth." The truth is "All is God". Such a great soul is rare indeed. It does not mean that God cannot be realized without facing several hurdles. But it means that such devotees who want to realize God from the core of their hearts are rare. If a devotee wants to realize Him, he can realize Him because this human birth's purpose is nothing else besides realizing Him.

All the people can't enjoy worldly prosperity and pleasures equally but all of them can realize God as was realized by Lord Śaṅkara, Nārada, Vasiṣṭha, Sanaka-Sanandana and other sages and ascetics etc. So a man should never miss such a golden opportunity.

The Lord possesses an unparalleled trait that He reveals Himself as corn for the hungry, water for the thirsty, pleasure for the seekers of pleasures and also as persons senses, mind, intellect and thoughts etc. In the form of pain He warns us that pain is the result of the enjoyment of pleasures. So if one enjoys sensual pleasures he will have to suffer. So he should not enjoy the pleasures because pleasures are nothing besides the Lord and the Lord has to reveal Himself as pleasures for him. But how gracious the Lord is that He reveals Himself as a creature desires! Such a great soul who realizes that all is God is very rare.

There was an ascetic who worshipped God Gaṇeśa. He had an idol of Gaṇeśa and another one of the rat-both made of gold. Both of them weighed equally. Once the ascetic decided to go on a pilgrimage. So he went to a goldsmith to sell them. The goldsmith weighed them and told the ascetic that the cost of each of the two was the same. At this the ascetic grew angry with the goldsmith and asked him how a vèhicle could be equal in value to the Lord. The goldsmith replied, "Sire, I don't buy either God Gaṇeśa or his vehicle, the rat. I buy gold. So I shall pay you according to their weight." Thus as the goldsmith does not see Lord Gaṇeśa or his vehicle, he sees only gold. So does a great soul behold God, he does not see the world.

There was a saint who was going along a road. He sat down to make water in the field of a farmer. The farmer thought that he was stealing water-melon from his field. So he gave him a blow with a stick. But afterwards he realized his mistake and said, "Sire, forgive me for my mistake; I mistook you for a thief". The saint said, "There is no need to excuse you because you have given the blow to the thief not to me." The farmer felt very sorry and admitted the saint to the hospital for necessary treatment. Then a man came to offer him milk. The saint said, "O, you are very clever, first you injured me with a stick, now you are offering me milk. You play different parts in this drama of life". The man was a bit afraid lest the saint should get him entangled and said, "Sir, I did not hit you." The saint said, "I very well know that first you beat me and now you are offering milk. Who else can be here besides you?" The saint saw every one as the revelation of the Lord. He who gave the blow, he who gave treatment and he who offered milk— all were manifestations of God for the saint. So he was talking in that manner.

Greatness of the Great Souls

It has been said about the great saints—

(1)

The liberated great souls continuously remain established in the self or in God. Their life, their company, their thoughts and the air touching their bodies lead human beings to salvation.

(2)

There are some people who don't know the greatness of those great men. So those great men come down to the level of common people and say that saints have done this and their actions and words constitute the scriptures.

(3)

When they come down to a still lower level they say that the saints should be obeyed.

(4)

The strivers who don't obey the saints are instructed to follow the principles prescribed by them.

(5)

When they go down still lower, they order them to do this or that.

[Those who carry out the behest of saints, in them doctrines of saints take practical shape. When a saint orders a striver to follow a principle the striver by the saint's grace gains a special power by which his conduct changes without much effort and that leads him to salvation. Even those who follow their principles without receiving their orders attain salvation.]

(6)

Sometimes they curse the strivers who refuse to obey them.

These above mentioned are the six categories of the saints from the first rank to the sixth rank. The lower the level to which they stoop, the more merciful they are. When they grant boon to a striver or lay him under a curse or scold him, they stoop to the lowest level yet it is their renunciation because they have accepted the lowest level for the welfare of humanity.

Similarly, God also remains established continuously in His own Self. This is something of the first rank. But the same Lord because of His excessive merciful nature incarnates to lead the creatures to salvation. The drama of His life enables men to attain salvation. Sometimes lowering Himself He gives preaching and by still lowering Himself by governing the people He orders and guides them. Finally still lowering Himself He grants the striver a boon or lays him under a curse or separates him from the body for his welfare and the welfare of the world.

Link:–In the verses sixteen to nineteen Lord Kṛṣṇa described the four types of devotees who seek refuge in Him. Now in the three verses that follow the Lord describes those devotees who seek refuge in the gods.

कामैस्तैस्तैर्हृतज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्तेऽन्यदेवताः ।
तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ।। २० ।।

kāmaistaistairhṛtajñānāḥ prapadyante'nyadevatāḥ
taṁ taṁ niyamamāsthāya prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā

Those whose discrimination has been led astray by various desires, constrained by their own nature, take refuge in other gods undertaking vows relating to each.* 20

Comment:

'Kāmaistaistairhṛtajñānāḥ'—Their discrimination has been led astray by desires of this world as well as the next one. It means that instead of applying their discrimination for God-Realization they remain

* In the fifteenth verse of this chapter it has been mentioned that the men are deprived of discrimination by delusion. But here they are deprived of discrimination by desires. There people depend on Matter to satisfy their desires while here they take refuge in the gods to satisfy their desires. There evils lead them to hells while here desires lead them to birth and death again and again.

engaged in satisfying their desires. Here they have desire for worldly pleasures and prosperity and hereafter they want to enjoy heavenly pleasures.

They have desire for prosperity, greatness and pleasures arising from pride. Similarly they have a two fold desire in performing virtuous deeds—to be considered pious in this world and to enjoy pleasures in the next world. Thus discrimination is led astray by desires and so they cannot distinguish the real from the unreal, the eternal from the transient and emancipation from bondage.

'Prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā'—They are constrained by their own nature because their discrimination is led astray by desires. Though a man can't give up his nature yet he can purify it by removing evils. He is quite free to make his nature pure and stainless. But so long as he aims at fulfilling his desires, he can't purify his nature, and to him it appears that his nature is powerful while he is weak. When a striver fixes his aim to be free from desires, he can purify and improve his nature and is not constrained by it.

'Taṁ taṁ niyamamāsthāya'—A man, constrained by his own nature, undertakes several vows and follows several methods such as oblation, penance, charity, incantations etc., to satisfy his desires.

'Prapadyante'nyadevatāḥ'—Undertaking several vows and following several methods to satisfy the desires, they instead of taking refuge in God, take refuge in the gods. They instead of accepting the gods as Divine manifestations accept them as separate entities. So the fruit reaped by them is perishable (Gītā 7/23). If they accept the gods as the Divine manifestations, they will gain imperishable fruit.

They take refuge in the gods because of desires and because of constraint of their nature.

यो यो यां यां* तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति ।
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥ २१ ॥

yo yo yāṁ yāṁ tanuṁ bhaktaḥ śraddhayārcitumicchati
tasya tasyācalāṁ śraddhāṁ tāmeva vidadhāmyaham

Whatever celestial form a devotee seeks to worship with faith, I make the faith of that devotee in that form steady. 21

Comment:

'Yo yo yāṁ yāṁ tanuṁ bhaktaḥ....tāmeva vidadhāmyaham'—The Lord makes the faith of devotees steady in the gods whom they seek to worship. The Lord does not force them to have faith only in Him. The faith in other gods does not lead them to salvation because they adore them to satisfy their desire. But He makes the faith of a devotee firm in Him if he has faith in Him and he wants to attain salvation because He is the disinterested friend of all beings (Gītā 5/29).

Now a question rises, why the Lord does not make the faith of all persons firm only in Him. The Lord seems to answer the question by saying that if He stabilizes their faith only in Him, they lose their independence and He is proved selfish. So He sets an example for human beings that they should be impartial and should not motivate other people to have faith in them and adore them only.

The second question rises that the Lord

* As here is the repetition of the words 'Yo' (who) and 'Yām' (which), in the sixth verse of the eighth chapter also there is repetition of the word 'Yām' (which). By this use the Lord means to say that as a man is free in the adoration of either God or the gods, he is free at his last moment to think of Him or of any one else.

by stabilizing their faith in other gods does not think of their welfare because that faith does not lead them to salvation. The answer is that if He stabilizes their faith in Him, removing it from others, they will cease their reverence and faith in Him. But if they are given independence, being intelligent and wise they may be attracted towards Him and that attraction will lead them to salvation. This is the best way to their salvation.

The third question rises that the Lord instead of uplifting them, degrades them by stabilizing their faith in other gods. The answer is that He stabilizes their faith not only in gods but in any one whom they wish (desire) to adore and they are free to change their wish because they have discrimination which is possessed by a man. Had they been weak, incapable and helpless in changing their inclinations (desire), then what glory is there of this human birth ? By using this discrimination they can kill the enemy in the form of desire, that is hard to overcome (3/43).

स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते ।
लभते च ततः कामान्मयैव विहितान्हि तान् ॥ २२ ॥

sa tayā śraddhayā yuktastasyārādhanamīhate
labhate ca tataḥ kāmānmayaiva vihitānhi tān

Endowed with that faith he worships that god and obtains his desired enjoyment as ordained by Me. 22

Comment:

'Sa tayā śraddhayā yuktaḥ'—The devotee whose faith has been made firm by Me worships the god and obtains his desired enjoyment. Actually his desire is satisfied by Me but he feels that his desire has been satisfied by the gods. The fact is that the gods' power is nothing else besides My power and they satisfy the desires as ordained by Me.

The gods are just like the government officers in different departments. So their power is limited. The gods at the most can carry their devotees to their worlds. But after reaping the fruit of their virtuous deeds they have to come back to this world (Gītā 8/16).

By using the phrase 'Mayaiva' Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that the whole universe is managed by Him and so whatever one obtains is ordained only by Him. If a man understands this mystery, he can't help being attracted towards Him.

Link:–Now Lord Kṛṣṇa describes the fruit according to their worship.

अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पमेधसाम् ।
देवान्देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥ २३ ॥

antavattu phalaṁ teṣāṁ tadbhavatyalpamedhasām
devāndevayajo yānti madbhaktā yānti māmapi

The fruit gained by these people of meagre intellect is perishable. The worshippers of the gods attain the gods; whereas My devotees attain Me alone. 23

Comment:

'Antavattu phalaṁ teṣāṁ tadbhavatyalpamedhasām'—The worshippers of the gods gain finite and perishable fruit. Here a question arises that the fruit ordained by God should be imperishable.

Then why do they gain perishable fruit? The answer is that they have desire for perishable fruit and moreover they accept gods' entities separate from God. But if they worship the gods without a desire for fruit or worship them as Divine manifestations having no separate entity, they can gain imperishable fruit viz., can realize God.

By using the term 'Tat' Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that the fruit is ordained only by Him but because of desire it becomes perishable.

By using the phrase 'Alpamedhasām' (meagre intellect), Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that such devotees are of meagre intellect because they have to undertake several vows and follow several methods but the fruit is finite and perishable. But in the worship of the Lord a devotee without undertaking several vows and without following several methods gains infinite and imperishable fruit. The worshippers of the gods follow the cycle of birth and death while the worshippers of the Lord being free from the shackles of birth and death attain salvation.

'Devāndevayajo yānti madbhaktā yānti māmapi'—The worshippers of the gods attain the gods whereas the devotees of the Lord attain Him. As they are votaries of gods, they are not devoted to the Lord, so their intellect is meagre and paltry. The devotees of God whether they worship Him with a desire or without a desire attain Him. But it is not necessary that their desires may be satisfied. God satisfies their desires only if they are for their welfare. But if they are harmful for the devotees, the Lord does not satisfy them.

Our affinity for God is eternal but we are reminded of it through adoration. Having attained Him there is no return to this world (Gītā 15/6). But our affinity with the gods is not eternal and therefore, having attained them we have to return to this world of mortals (Gītā 9/21).

"My devotees attain Me alone". Having this feeling the Lord has called the four types of devotees—the seeker of worldly objects, the sufferer, the seeker of knowledge and the man of wisdom, virtuous and noble (7/16—18).

'Madbhaktā yānti māmapi'—It means that even the vilest sinner being His fragment may attain Him if he abandons his affinity for the world which is assumed.

An Exceptional Fact

The whole universe is nothing besides the manifestation of God. But we are unable to realize this fact because first we accept the world as a separate entity from God and secondly we have desires. If we accept the universe as Divine manifestation, our desires will be rooted out or if we root out desires, the universe will be seen as Divine manifestation. Then all our actions will be performed as service to God. If both are done together we'll be immensely benefited.

Link:–The worshippers of the gods gain the fruit which is finite and perishable. Then why do men get entangled in it? Why don't they worship God? The explanation comes in the next verse.

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।
परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥ २४ ॥

avyaktaṁ vyaktimāpannaṁ manyante māmabuddhayaḥ
paraṁ bhāvamajānanto mamāvyayamanuttamam

Men of poor understanding think of Me, the unmanifest as an ordinary human being not knowing My supreme state immutable and unsurpassed. 24

Comment:

'Avyaktaṁ vyaktimāpannaṁ manyante māmabuddhayaḥ paraṁ bhāvamajānanto mamāvyayamanuttamam'—The men of poor understanding think of Me as having been born and dead just like ordinary men. They think that I am also manifested in the mid state only like other beings (Gītā 2/28). They don't know Me as imperishable uniform, immaculate, all-pervading, untainted, beyond time, space and causation and as an incarnation of God. So they instead of worshipping Me, worship the gods.

There is not total negation of discrimination in them. But their understanding is poor because they don't admit the perishable world as perishable. Secondly they know that desires can't be satisfied, they will have to be abandoned, but they don't abandon them.

They don't know My supreme state-immutable and unsurpassed. So they for the satisfaction of their desires are attracted towards the gods. Had they known Me as unsurpassed, they would have worshipped Me only.

(i) Men of understanding are those who, accepting the Lord as unsurpassed, take refuge in Him. (ii) Men of poor understanding are those who regarding the gods as superior to them take refuge in them. They are somewhat polite and simple. (iii) Men without understanding are those who regard God as an ordinary human being and think that they are supreme (Gītā 16/14). God in spite of being imperishable, the Lord of the whole universe, manifests Himself through His own divine potency keeping His nature (Prakṛti) under control. But the men of poor understanding don't know that He is beyond the perishable Matter and superior to the imperishable soul.

An Exceptional Fact

Some people interpret this verse that those who think of the Lord, the unmanifest, as having manifestation are of poor understanding because they don't know Him as unmanifest and formless. Others interpret it that those who regard Lord Kṛṣṇa, the incarnation of God, Who works as Arjuna's charioteer as formless, are of poor understanding.

But both of the views are not correct. The reason is that the former will censure the Lord endowed with form and His devotees while the latter will censure formless God and the devotees who worship formless God. When even the elements such as earth, water and fire etc., can be with form and without form, why can the Lord not be with form and without form, with attributes and without attributes?

The Gītā accepts both His aspects, the unmanifest as well as the manifest. In the sixth verse of the fourth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa declares that He in spite of being unborn manifests Himself, in spite of being immortal disappears and in spite of being the Lord of the whole universe becomes an obedient son or pupil while in the fourth verse of the ninth chapter He declares that all this is permeated by Him in His unmanifest aspect. Thus He can be both—manifest and unmanifest.

Link:–Why do people think of the Lord as an ordinary man? The explanation comes.

नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः ।
मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ॥ २५ ॥

nāhaṁ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yogamāyāsamāvṛtaḥ
mūḍho'yaṁ nābhijānāti loko māmajamavyayam

Veiled by My divine potency (Yoga Māyā) I am not manifest to all. Hence these ignorant folk do not recognize Me as the unborn and imperishable Supreme-Spirit. 25

Comment:

'Mūḍho'yaṁ nābhijānāti loko māmajamavyayam'—I am unborn and imperishable viz., free from birth and death. But I stage the play of My revelation and disappearance. In spite of being unborn I incarnate and in spite of being imperishable I disappear in the same way as the sun seems to rise and set. Thus those who know Me without birth and death, are undeluded (Gītā 10/3, 15/19). But those who regard Me, the Lord of creation, as an ordinary mortal subject to birth and death are fools (Gītā 9/11).

The reason why a man does not regard the Lord as unborn and imperishable is that he by forgetting his real affinity with Him by error has accepted his affinity with this body "I am this body and this body is mine." It is because of this veil that he regards the Lord as born and dead.

The men don't regard Him as unborn and imperishable because of two factors—One is that He is concealed by His divine potency and the second is their own folly. It can be explained by an illustration. A man remains confined to his house which is shut. He is free to go out of his house. But he is unable to cross the walls round the city when the gate of the walls is closed. But the king can open the gate of the city and also force the man to open the gate of his house. Similarly, the man can get rid of his folly. But he can realize God only by God's grace. Only he whom God enables to realize Him, can know Him. If a man surrenders himself to Him, He removes his ignorance as well as His deluding potency.

'Nāhaṁ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yogamāyāsamāvṛtaḥ'—I am not manifest to the group of ignorant people because they instead of recognizing Me as the unborn and imperishable Supreme-Spirit neglect Me regarding Me as an ordinary man. It means that I hide myself in My divine potency before those who regard Me as mortal and I am not manifest to them. But I am manifest to those who having faith in Me regard Me as unborn, imperishable and the Lord of the whole creation.

The Lord's divine potency is strange and uncommon. Men see God who is hidden by His divine potency according to their feelings.*

Here the Lord has declared that those who don't recognize Him as unborn and imperishable are ignorant while in the second verse of the tenth chapter He declares that neither gods nor the great sages know the secret of His birth. So a doubt arises why the Lord has declared those who don't recognize Him as unborn and imperishable, ignorant while He has not declared those gods and sages ignorant who don't know the secret of His birth. The clarification is that the Lord Himself has declared that He is the origin of all the gods and great sages, and as a child can't see the birth of its father, the gods and sages can't know the secret of His birth; but men can accept Him as unborn and imperishable. If they don't do so they are called ignorant.

* When Lord Kṛṣṇa along with Balarāma came to the arena, he seemed diamond-hard to wrestlers, a virtuous person to common men, Cupid, the god of love to women, a kinsman to cowherds, a strict ruler to the cunning kings, a child to elderly people, death to Kamsa, gigantic to the ignorant, cosmic soul to the ascetics and favourite God to the devotees of the Vṛṣṇi clan. (Śrīmadbhā. 10/43/17).

Link:–The Lord is veiled by His divine potency to those who don't recognize Him as unborn and imperishable. But no one can remain covered with a veil before Him —This fact is mentioned in the verse that follows.

वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन ।
भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ।। २६ ।।

vedāhaṁ samatītāni vartamānāni cārjuna
bhaviṣyāṇi ca bhūtāni māṁ tu veda na kaścana

I Know, O Arjuna, the beings of the past, the present and the future, but no one knows Me. 26

Comment:

'Vedāhaṁ samatītāni vartamānāni cārjuna bhaviṣyāṇi ca bhūtāni māṁ tu veda na kaścana'—Here the Lord has used three adjectives to express the past, the present and the future for the beings but for Himself He has used only the present. It means that in God's eye the past, the future and the present are only present. So He knows all the beings of the past, the future and the present. As in a movie the incidents for the persons seeing the movie seem to occur in the past, the future and the present while in the film they are all in the present, similarly from the view-point of beings there is distinction between the past, the future and the present but in reality there is only the present because the beings are within the limit of time while the Lord is beyond the limit of time. Time, things, men, incidents and circumstances etc., change while God ever remains the same. Knowledge of the beings who are bound by time is limited while knowledge of God is limitless. The beings by practising Yoga enhance their knowledge but that knowledge is limited. Such Yogīs are called 'Yuñjāna Yogī' (the ascetics who are practising austerities but have not attained final beatitude). But the Lord is 'Yukta Yogī' i.e., He knows all beings and the whole world all the time without practising Yoga. All beings of the past, the future and the present constantly abide in God; they can never be separated from Him. It is beyond His power to separate Himself from them. So they can never escape His observation.

'Maṁ tu veda na kaścana'—It means that the ignorant folk, who don't recognize Me as unborn and imperishable but regard Me as an ordinary man, don't know Me but I know all of them. As a man from inside can see the outerside through the curtain made from split bamboo sticks, hung on the door, but a man from outside the door can't see the innerside through it, the ignorant people veiled by the curtain of divine potency can't see the Lord while He can see all of them.

Now a doubt arises that as the Lord knows the future of all beings, it means that man's emancipation and bondage are also predestined. Then how can a man attain emancipation or salvation by making efforts?

The clarification is that God has bestowed upon man this last life. Now it is upto him whether he attains salvation or he has a downfall (Gītā 7/27; 8/6), it is not decided by God.

The Lord Himself in the nineteenth verse of this chapter declares, "In the very last of all births viz., in this human birth, the man of wisdom takes refuge in Me, realizing that all this is God. Such a great soul is rare indeed." It means that men are free to attain salvation or God-Realization. If a

man's rebirth in a particular womb is predecided by God, it means that man is not free in attaining salvation and there is no utility of sanction and prohibition, preached by God, saints and preceptors and in the scriptures. Moreover the Lord's declarations, "Whatever form any devotee with faith wishes to worship that faith of his I make steady" (7/21) and "Thinking of whatever being he at the end gives up his body, to that being does he attain" (8/6) will prove futile and the man's worship and the freedom bestowed upon him of the last thought which determines his next birth will also go in vain.

The Lord by His grace bestows this human body so that the man may attain salvation. In the thirty-third verse of the eleventh chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, "These warriors have already been slain by Me. You, be merely an instrument." Similarly, the Lord has bestowed upon men all the resources for attaining salvation by His grace. He should merely become an instrument. The Lord also declares, "By receiving this boat in the form of human body and favourable wind in the form of My grace, one who does not attain salvation, commits suicide" (Śrīmadbhā. 11/20/17). In the Gītā it is also declared, "Seeing the same Lord dwelling equally in all, he does not kill his self by the self and thereby reaches the supreme state" (Gītā 13/28). It proves that the Lord has bestowed upon human beings the right, resources and understanding so that they can attain salvation. If they don't attain salvation by receiving this priceless opportunity, they commit suicide and follow the cycle of birth and death. If by receiving this human body a man makes proper use of the resources without working against the ordinance of the scriptures and God, his salvation is axiomatic and there is no obstacle to it.

Thus a man should have a firm determination to make the best possible use of his resources in accordance with the ordinance of the scriptures. But if they are misused by an error, he should have a burning sensation and pray to God, "O God, I regret for my error. Give me power so that I may not deviate from your ordinances and principles." In such cases God's help is certain.

Man's inability can be of two kinds—First a man is not able to do a piece of work because he has not got enough power, as a servant can't lift a house and carry it if desired by his master and secondly that he has the power and can do the work but because of indolence he does not do it. A striver suffers from the latter sort of inability. In order to do away with this inability a striver should pray to God.

God can never will that this human being will have to take so many births, because He has given him freedom to attain salvation. Not only this, the Lord does not will ever for countless animate and inanimate beings to take births. God does not force a man to follow the wheel of birth and death. Other beings, besides men, follow this cycle of birth and death according to the fruit of their actions. But if any one of those beings either in the human birth or even in any other birth takes refuge in the Lord, He liberates him from sins of infinite births (Mānasa 5/44/1).

Link:—In the previous verse Lord Kṛṣṇa declared that no one knows Him. Why do people not know Him? The answer is provided in the next verse.

इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन भारत ।
सर्वभूतानि संमोहं सर्गे यान्ति परंतप ॥ २७ ॥

icchādveṣasamutthena dvandvamohena bhārata
sarvabhūtāni saṁmohaṁ sarge yānti paraṁtapa

By the delusion of the pairs of opposites arising from desire and aversion, all beings, O scorcher of the foes in Bharata family, are subject to illusion viz; birth and death. 27

Comment:

'Icchādveṣasamutthena dvandva-mohena bhārata sarvabhūtāni saṁmoham sarge yānti paraṁtapa'— The delusion arises from desire and aversion and it is because of delusion that beings having disinclination for God, follow the cycle of birth and death.

A man by having disinclination for the world should be engaged in adoration of God. The main obstacle to this engagement is that a man without attaching importance to discrimination performs actions being guided by attachment and aversion and thus he degrades himself. A man has two contrary mental dispositions—inclination and disinclination. He has to be inclined towards God and to be disinclined from the world i.e., he has to be devoted to God and dispassionate to the world. But when he applies both these dispositions to the world, his devotion and dispassion are respectively changed into attachment and aversion which cause him to be entangled in the world and he has a total disinclination for God. Thus because of his attachment and aversion to the pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain etc., he can't move towards spirituality even though sometimes he attends religious discourses, studies the scriptures and thinks over them. But because of his attachment to the world he has a resolve that he has to make efforts to cause favourable circumstances and to do away with the unfavourable ones because he can't maintain his body without them.

Out of these pairs of opposites also if he is particularly attached to one subject viz., God or has even aversion to Him, it may also lead him to salvation. For example, Bilvamaṅgala was attached only to the prostitute named Cintāmaṇi. He was scolded by her that if he had worshipped the Lord with the devotion with which he loved her mortal body, he would have attained salvation. As a result of her scolding his attention was diverted to God and he attained salvation. Similarly the attachment of Gopīs for Lord Kṛṣṇa led them to salvation. Śiśupāla's enmity (aversion) to Lord Kṛṣṇa led him to salvation. While Kaṁsa's fear of God led him to salvation. Though Śiśupāla and Kaṁsa also attained salvation yet they couldn't enjoy the bliss of devotion. It means that attachment or aversion to God leads to salvation while attachment or aversion to the world leads to degradation.

By the pairs of opposites the attachment for the world becomes firm, because of the desire for the one and aversion to the other. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa in the second chapter orders Arjuna "Rise above the pairs of opposites" (2/45). He also declares, "He who has transcended the pairs of opposites, is easily freed from bondage"(5/3). "The undeluded devotee freed from the pairs of opposites attain the imperishable supreme state"(15/5). In the thirty-fourth verse of the third chapter also the Lord has declared them as the man's main enemies (3/34). He also declares, "The men of virtuous deeds, being freed from delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites, worship Me with a firm resolve in every-way" (7/28). Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa has laid great emphasis on being free from the pairs of opposites.

Why do beings follow the cycle of birth and death? According to the scriptures ignorance is the root of life and death. But according to the saints it is the misuse of the circumstances arising from attachment. Performance of actions with a desire for fruits and misuse of circumstances i.e., performance of actions against the ordinance of the scriptures leads a man to his birth in good and evil wombs viz., eighty-four lac forms of lives and hells.

Right use of the available circumstances does away with delusion i.e., roots out the cycle of birth and death. How to make

right use of circumstances? We should have a firm determination not to misuse them i.e., not to act against the ordinance of the scriptures and decorums. By having this sort of determination, circumstances will be used properly and rightly. By doing so we shall not be proud of our virtuous actions because we are determined only not to misuse the circumstances. Thus we shall be free from pride of doership. By doing so, we shall not have a desire for the fruit of actions because how can we have a desire for fruit when we are not the doer? Thus being free from the doership and fruit of action, emancipation is axiomatic.

Generally, strivers divide adoration and worldly affairs in watertight compartments. So they attach importance to adoration and meditation etc., but they don't pay attention to attachment-aversion, desire-anger etc., in their practical life. They form an opinion that while performing action attachment and aversion are natural, they can't be wiped out. Because of this assumption, attachment and aversion, which are the obstacles to their spiritual progress, continue. So a striver does not make a quick spiritual progress. He, while performing either the mundane or the spiritual affairs should be free from attachment and aversion.

A striver should always keep the fact in mind, "I am a striver and I have to realize God." Thus by having the only aim of God–Realization, both kinds of his actions-mundane as well as spiritual-will become parts of his spiritual discipline.

Link:–In the previous verse Lord Kṛṣṇa talked about the beings who are under delusion of the pairs of opposites. Now in the next verse He talks about those who have got over the pairs of opposites.

येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम्।
ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढव्रताः॥ २८॥

yeṣāṁ tvantagataṁ pāpaṁ janānāṁ puṇyakarmaṇām
te dvandvamohanirmuktā bhajante māṁ dṛḍhavratāḥ

But those men of virtuous deeds whose sins have come to an end, being freed from delusion of the pairs of opposites, worship Me with a firm resolve in everyway. 28

Comment:

'Yeṣāṁ tvantagataṁ pāpaṁ janānāṁ puṇyakarmaṇām te dvandvamohanirmuktā bhajante māṁ dṛḍhavratāḥ'—The term 'Tu' (but) has been used to show the singularity of those who, being free from delusion, worship the Lord. The men of virtuous deeds are those who have realized that the only aim of human life is God-Realization. They have a firm determination to realize Him during this human life which has been bestowed upon them for God-Realization, not for sensual pleasures. It means that determination is a better means than oblation, charity and penance etc., for purification because this determination is of one's own self while actions such as oblation, charity etc., are external.

'Antagataṁ pāpam' means that when a man has a firm determination that he has to realize God, all his sins are rooted out because disinclination for God is the root of sins. The saints have said that there are one and a half sins and one and a half virtues. Disinclination for God is one sin, and to be engaged in evil and immoral actions is half. Similarly, inclination for God is one virtue and engagement in good and moral actions is half. When a man surrenders himself to God, all his sins perish.

Secondly those people whose sole aim is God-Realization are virtuous because by having this aim all their sins come to an end. Even if, because of the past influences, any sin is committed, God Who dwells in their hearts destroys that sin.

Thirdly if a man determines from his heart never to commit a sin in future, his sins perish.

'Te dvandvamohanirmuktā bhajante māṁ dṛḍhavratāḥ'—The men of virtuous deeds being free from delusion of the pairs of opposites worship God with a firm resolve. This duality (pairs of opposites) can be of several kinds.

1. Whether they should be engaged in divine adoration for salvation or in worldly affairs for welfare in this world.
2. Whether they should worship Lord Viṣṇu, the preserver, Lord Śiva, the destroyer, Goddess Durgā, God Gaṇeśa or the Sun. Out of these five sects which one should they follow?
3. Which of the following principles—dualistic, non-dualistic, special-non-dualistic, pure-non-dualistic etc., should they follow?
4. Which of the Disciplines—of devotion, knowledge, action and meditation etc., should they follow?
5. There are pairs of opposites— favourable and unfavourable circumstances, pleasure and pain, attachment and aversion etc.

The men of virtuous deeds being free from all the spiritual and mundane dualistic delusions worship God with a firm resolve.

If a man has the only aim of God-Realization, all pairs of opposites come to an end even if he follows any spiritual discipline or principle or sect or method. A striver should follow his path with exclusive devotion without criticizing other paths. He should respect the followers of other paths without regarding them as inferior to him and without considering their sect inferior to his. So long as a striver disregards others' principles, religions and sects etc., he can't realize God. Therefore, a striver by paying due regards to all sects, principles and methods, should follow his own path with full faith and undivided devotion. By doing so his dualism comes to an end.

It is human nature that when a man lives in spiritual environment, he thinks that salvation is the great achievment of life. But when he lives in the mundane environment, he attaches greater importance to the worldly affairs and secondary importance to adoration for God because he thinks that he has to perform actions in order to get the necessities of life and there is not much utility of adoration.

Those whose only aim is salvation without caring for worldly pleasure and pain, profit and loss, fame and defame, regard and disregard etc., are free from delusion of the pairs of opposites.

'Dṛḍhavratāḥ' means that the striver has a firm resolve to worship God whether he is dualistic or non-dualistic, endowed with form or formless, two-armed or four-armed. He is not much concerned about the different forms etc*.

When a striver follows the spiritual discipline he is confronted with three facts: What is God like? What is the nature of soul? What is the nature of the world? The answer comes 'God exists'. He is not much concerned about where He lives and what He does etc. Similarly, about the soul it is enough for him 'I am,' and about the world it is enough to know that it is to be renounced. It means that a striver, by depending on God and having disinclination for the world which is to be renounced, has a firm resolve to attain Him. By having a firm resolve he becomes free from the delusion of the pairs of opposites. The gist of all the philosophies is to have an

* He who protects the one who being afraid of the very strong fast running death-snake, takes refuge in Him, and being afraid of Whom even death is running,I take refuge in Him (Śrīmadbhā. 8/2/33).

inclination for God by having disinclination for the world.

Secondly, a striver has no knowledge about God Who is attributeless and neither has he beheld God endowed with attributes but he knows that the world is perishing every moment and assumes that in the world there is nothing besides God. By having this knowledge and assumption he worships God with a firm resolve. Just like a chaste wife who is faithful to her husband, the man of virtuous deeds, by depending on God, worships Him.

An Exceptional Fact

It is mentioned in the scriptures including the Gītā and also in the utterances of saints that sinners have no inclination for God. This is a general rule. But sins can't force a man to have disinclination for God because he is a fragment of God. Therefore, his purity may be veiled by sins but can't be destroyed. Therefore, even the vilest sinner who worships Him with exclusive devotion becomes virtuous (Gītā 9/31)*. Therefore, a man should never think that his sins are obstacles to his adoration. Sins produce unfavourable circumstances and then perish. If sins had been obstacles to adoration, Lord Kṛṣṇa would have not declared, "Even the vilest sinner worships Me with exclusive devotion (Gītā 9/30). It means that sins are not obstacles to worship the Lord . The sins of those who worship the Lord with a firm resolve surrendering themselves to Him, come to an end. So circumstances can't be obstacles to adoration.

Men having a desire for the fruit of their virtuous actions, go to heaven while the evil actions lead men to hells. But God by His special grace bestows the human body in between i.e., without forcing them to get the fruit of their actions. We have got this human life for God-Realization, so we should never be disappointed as far as God-Realization is concerned.

This human life is not meant for sensual pleasures. It is generally called the life for actions. But according to the principles and utterances of the saints, the only aim of this human life is God-Realization. Both the favourable and the unfavourable circumstances are the means for God-Realization. A striver in favourable circumstances should serve others and in unfavourable circumstances he should give up the desire for favourable cirumstances. By doing so both types of circumstances will become the means for spiritual progress. In favourable circumstances old virtues perish and there are chances to be entangled in sensual pleasures. But in unfavourable circumstances old sins perish and a man becomes more alert and careful in spiritual discipline. Therefore, saints value unfavourable circumstances more than the favourable ones.

Link:–In the beginning of the seventh chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa declared that the striver with his mind attached to Him, taking refuge in Him and practising Yoga would without any doubt know Him in full. Now He concludes these three facts in the next two verses.

जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये ।
ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ॥ २९ ॥†

jarāmaraṇamokṣāya māmāśritya yatanti ye
te brahma tadviduḥ kṛtsnamadhyātmaṁ karma cākhilam

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* In other lives besides the human life this is not a rule that the nature may be improved. By reaping the fruit of sinful actions in eighty-four lac forms of lives and in hells, sins are wiped out but nature does not improve. But in human life in spite of having sins a striver's nature can be improved. Sins result in unfavourable circumstances such as disease etc., while good company, spirituality and change of doership change a striver's nature.

† In the twenty-ninth and thirtieth verses in the phrase 'Māmāśritya' (having taken refuge in), Madāśrayaḥ; in the term 'Yatanti' (strive), 'Yogaṁ yuñjan' (practising-Yoga); and in 'Yuktacetasaḥ' (steadfast in mind) 'Mayyāsaktamanāḥ' (with mind clinging) have been concluded. Similarly the term 'Samagraṁ' has been used for Brahma, action, Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva and Adhiyajña.

Those who having taken refuge in Me, strive for deliverance from old age and death, know Brahma (the Infinite), the individual self and entire field of action. 29

Comment:

'Jarāmaraṇamokṣāya māmāśritya yatanti ye'—Here deliverance from old age and death does not mean that after knowing Brahma, the individual self and entire field of action, the man will not suffer from old age and will not die. But it means that old age and death will not be able to make him sad. As in the thirty-fourth verse of the thirteenth chapter in 'Bhūta prakṛti mokṣam' the Lord means to say that the striver realizes that he is different from Nature and its evolutes, here He means to say that the striver realizes that he is different from the body and thus old age and death have no effect on him.

A young man is free from old age and death only at present but it does not mean that he has deliverance from them for ever, while the liberated souls are always free from them because they have separated themselves from their bodies which suffer from old age and death. When a man identifies himself with the body, he accepts the body's old age and death as his own. This is so because he has assumed "I am the body and the body is mine." So in the eighth verse of the thirteenth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna to perceive pain and evil in birth, death, old age and disease. It means that the striver should not accept his affinity of 'I'ness and 'Mineness' with this body. When this affinity is renounced, he is delivered from old age and death because his attachment for the body is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21). In fact he is separate from the body because the body decays and dies while he ever lives.

In the phrase 'Māmāśritya yatanti ye' there are two factors—to take refuge in Him and to strive. If a man strives, he may feel proud of his achievement as the result of striving. But if he takes refuge in Him, he may become idle and lazy and be engaged in prosperity and pleasure. Therefore, a striver should strive promptly according to the ordinance of the scriptures and give credit for the success to God.

So long as a man attaches importance to the body and the world regarding them as permanent, he, in spite of striving, does not realize God. Therefore, he should not attach importance to them. He should strive to remove these two stumbling blocks—attaching importance to the body and the world and accepting their independent existence. But those who taking refuge in God strive, are superior because they have a feeling that they are engaged in spiritual discipline only by God's grace. Thus by taking refuge in Him and having no pride they know the entire form of the Lord.

Those who strive without taking refuge in Him for salvation also know Him but they don't know His entire form. As a man practises 'Prāṇāyāma' (the process of restraining breath), he achieves accomplishments (siddhi) and if he rises above them he knows formless God or gets established in his own self. Similarly, the Bauddhas and Jains who don't believe in God, by following the spiritual discipline according to their religion, by renouncing their affinity for the world, attain salvation. But those who, having disinclination for the world, taking refuge in God, strive by knowing the Lord in His entire form receive divine love. To express this singularity Lord Kṛṣṇa has used the expression 'Māmāśritya yatanti ye'.

'Te brahma tat (viduḥ)'—Thus by striving they attain Brahma (the Infinite) Who is formless, attributeless and who can't be perceived by mind, intellect and senses.

God exists in all the beings because He pervades everywhere, every time, all the things and men. But He is not perceived because we have attached importance to the transitory and kaleidoscopic body and world and have accepted their independent

existence. So ever-attained God seems to be unattained.

'Kṛtsnamadhyātmaṁ (viduḥ)'—They know the entire individual self. In the tenth verse of the fifteenth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "The ignorant don't perceive the soul departing from one body and dwelling in the other one but those who possess the eye of wisdom perceive." This perception does not include the knowledge of the number of beings, their activities and their fate. But they do know that the self (soul) is different from the body. Those who take refuge in Him realize this reality.

By taking refuge in God when a striver breaks up his affinity for actions and things, he realizes that his self, as well as the self of all the beings is pure and detached from Prakṛti. He comes to know that he can never be identified with actions and bodies and he can never be separated from his self. This knowledge is the entire knowledge about the self.

'Karma cākhilam viduḥ'—They know the entire field of action i.e., why and how the universe is created. God has created the bodies of the people according to the class (caste) they belong to. But because of detachment the Lord remains a non-doer and has no craving for the fruit of actions (Gītā 4/13-14). Similarly, if a man performs his duty and actions without the feeling of doership and without the desire for the fruit of actions, he is not bound by actions. Thus the knowledge about the entire field of action is that a man has no affinity for actions, he is completely detached from them.

The striver who takes refuge in Him with exclusive devotion, does not depend on things and actions. He very well realizes that all things and actions are kaleidoscopic and perishable. No action or thing even in Brahmaloka (the abode of Brahmā) is eternal, they are subject to appearance and disappearance. So he has not the least affinity for actions. This is knowledge about the entire field of action.

It means that a striver by taking refuge in God knows Brahma (the Infinite), the individual self and entire field of action i.e., he realizes "In the world there is nothing else besides God"(7/7) and "All this is God" (7/19). Thus he comes to know that Brahma, the individual self and entire field of action are nothing else besides God.

साधिभूताधिदैवं मां साधियज्ञं च ये विदुः ।
प्रयाणकालेऽपि च मां ते विदुर्युक्तचेतसः ॥ ३० ॥

sādhibhūtādhidaivaṁ māṁ sādhiyajñaṁ ca ye viduḥ
prayāṇakāle'pi ca māṁ te viduryuktacetasaḥ

Those, who realize Me in the Adhibhūta (the field of matter), in Adhidaiva (Brahmā) and in Adhiyajña (the unmanifest Divinity), having steadfast mind realize Me even at the hour of death. 30

Comment:

'Śādhibhūtādhidaivaṁ māṁ sādhiyajñaṁ ca ye viduḥ'—[Having described attributeless and formless God in the preceding verse, He describes God Who is endowed with attributes and form in this verse.]

Here 'Adhibhūta' stands for Matter which has predominance of darkness attribute (the mode of ignorance). This matter has no independent existence of its own. It is transitory and kaleidoscopic. But it seems real, pleasant and attractive because of God Who is real, pleasant and attractive. As ice has no existence without water, the matter is nothing but the manifestation of God. This is knowledge about God and matter.

'Adhidaiva' is Brahmā, the creator of the world. He has predominance of

'Rajoguṇa' (physical attribute) (the mode of passion). The Lord manifests Himself as Brahmā also. This is the true knowledge about Adhidaiva and God.

'Adhiyajña' is Lord Viṣṇu who pervades everywhere in the form of unmanifest Divinity. In Him there is predominance of thought attribute (the mode of goodness). This is true knowledge about Adhiyajña and God.

The knowledge about God with Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva and Adhiyajña is that He stands holding the entire creation in one limb (Gītā 10/42; 11/7) and in His supreme divine Form there are Adhibhūta (Infinite universes), Adhidaiva (Brahmā) and Adhiyajña (Viṣṇu) etc. Arjuna also says, "O God, I behold in Your body all the gods and multitudes of different beings, Brahmā, the Lord perched on the lotus, Lord Śiva and all the sages and celestial serpents"(Gītā 11/15). Thus in reality Lord Kṛṣṇa is Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva and Adhiyajña.

'Prayāṇakāle'pi ca mām te vidur-yuktacetasaḥ'—Steadfast in mind are those, who remain equanimous in gain and loss, of prosperity and pleasures, and becoming indifferent to the world, are engrossed in worship of God. Such people realize Him at the time of death i.e., remain established in Him even in the pangs at the time of death, they don't lose heart in the least in spite of great turmoil in their physical and subtle bodies.

An Exceptional Fact About God's Entire Form

(1) All the evils are born by accepting our affinity for Matter and its evolutes—actions and things etc., and then those actions and things seem to have their independent existence. But if we by breaking up our affinity for them get established in God, their assumed independent existence merges into God.

In the world we assume a thing or a person good or bad but actually that thing or person is nothing besides the manifestation of God. But as far as decorum of caste and Āśrama (Religious orders of the different periods of life), is concerned we have to observe them in accordance with the ordinance of the scriptures and great souls because they are the guides to attain salvation.

There was existence of God before this creation and He will remain after its dissolution. When a striver realizes the reality about God, this existence of the universe merges into Him. It does not mean that the creation perishes, but it means that the striver does not attach importance to the world which is an obstacle to salvation. As in ornaments made of gold there is nothing besides gold, a striver of steadfast mind realizes that in the world there is nothing besides God. This fact has been explained in the twenty-ninth and thirtieth verses.

(2) For the worship of God there is description of His two forms—one with attributes and the second attributeless. The Lord endowed with attributes is of two types—one endowed with attributes with form and the other endowed with attributes but formless. The attributeless Lord is not of two types, He is only attributeless and formless. The formless Lord is again of two kinds—one endowed with attributes but formless and the other attributeless and formless.

The devotees are of two types—one who worships God with attributes and the other who worships God without attributes. But both of them start their worship of the Lord Who is endowed with attributes but is formless. He assumes that there is God Who is the supreme Lord and He is the most merciful and the best one. Thus though a devotee thinks of God Who is attributeless and formless, yet with his intellect he thinks of God Who is endowed with attributes and is

formless.* The reason is that intellect being the evolute of Prakṛti (with attributes) can't have an access to attributeless God.

The worshippers first worship God Who is endowed with attributes and form. But so long as His form is not fixed in their minds, they assume, "God exists and He is ours." The firmer His form gets fixed, the higher their adoration is regarded. At last when they are able to behold Him, talk to Him, touch Him and receive blessing from Him, their worship attains perfection.

The worshippers of attributeless God think of Him as One who pervades everywhere. The subtler their disposition grows, the higher their worship is regarded. At last when their attachment and egoism etc., are completely renounced and no feeling of 'I'ness or 'You'ness is left but only pure consciousness remains, their worship attains perfection.

Thus both the devotees after attaining perfection become one i.e., both of them attain the same Lord. The worshippers of the Lord endowed with attributes and form by His grace also realize the Lord Who is without attributes and form. If a striver adoring attributeless and formless God has some devotional influence and wants to behold Him, he can behold. If the Lord wants to make him an instrument for His mission, He reveals Himself before him as He revealed Himself before Madhusūdanācārya†.

(3) The Lord is endowed with attributes and He is also attributeless according to the feelings of devotees. Similarly He is endowed with form and is also formless. Not only this He is also beyond the two. But this reality is known only when a devotee realizes Him.

The Lord Who pervades everywhere with His divine traits such as beauty, love, glory, grace etc., is called God endowed with attributes. He is of two kinds.

(i) Endowed with attributes and formless—Just like the sky whose attribute is sound but is formless, the Lord pervading the entire universe is endowed with attributes and is formless.

(ii) Endowed with attributes and form—When the Lord Who is with attributes and is formless manifests Himself through His own divine potency, keeping His Nature (Prakṛti) under control and is perceived by senses, is called the Lord endowed with attributes and form.

When a striver assumes that God does not possess divine traits, He is called the Lord without attributes and form.

Attributes are also of two kinds (i) Uncommon divine traits such as beauty, love, glory and grace etc. (ii) Three modes of nature— Sattva (Thought attribute) (mode of goodness), Raja (Physical attribute) (mode of passion) and Tama (Darkness attribute) (mode of ignorance). God may either be endowed with attributes and be formless or He may be endowed with attributes and form, He is beyond the three modes of Nature. He, by controlling His Nature, plays the role of the Lord of creation, preservation and destruction of the universe and yet remains totally free from the modes of Nature (Gītā 7/13).

The Lord Who is never bound by attributes and has full command over them is called the Lord without attributes. Therefore, such a Lord can be called endowed with attributes as well as attributeless and also endowed with form and also formless. He has been described in His entire form in the twenty-ninth and thirtieth verses.

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* Adoration (Devotion) starts with God Who is endowed with attributes and is formless. So He has been described in that way in the twenty-eighth verse. Then in the twenty-ninth verse there is description of the Lord Who is attributeless and formless and in the thirtieth verse of One who is endowed with form and attributes. Thus each of them has been described in one verse. But in the eighth chapter each of the three types has been described in three verses eighth to tenth, eleventh to thirteenth and fourteenth to sixteenth respectively.

† One shrewd fellow who is adored by the followers of non-dualistic discipline, who is authorized to sit on the throne of paradise and who runs after cowherdesses forcefully had made me a slave of his feet.

A special note on the chapter

In this chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa first explained His changeable lower (insentient) nature by 'Aparā' and unchangeable higher (sentient) nature by 'Parā' (7/4-5). Then He explained that He is the origin and dissolution of the whole universe. But in the beginning and in the end only He exists (7/6-7). Then He explained His comprehensiveness by mentioning His seventeen divine manifestations in the form of cause (7/8—12). Afterwards, He explained that he who is under delusion of the three modes of nature i.e., who has accepted his affinity for the changing Matter can't know Him Who is beyond the modes of nature (7/13). In the fourteenth verse He explained that His wonderful illusion is extremely difficult to surmount. In the fifteenth verse He explained that the evil doers don't seek refuge in Him. In the sixteenth verse He explained four types of virtuous men who worship Him or take refuge in Him. Now the question arises why Lord Kṛṣṇa has inserted the fifteenth verse which seems to be out of context. The answer is that had He not included the fifteenth verse, it would have remained to be said, "Evil doers don't seek refuge in Me."

There are two types of people who take refuge in Him—First, those who regarding Him as God take refuge in Him (7/16—19) and second, those who regarding Him as an ordinary man worship (take refuge in) other gods in order to satisfy their desires (7/20—23). People worship the gods for two reasons—their increased desires and their failure to realize the greatness of God. Both of these have been explained respectively in (7/20—23) and (7/24). In the twenty-fifth verse He has explained that He is not manifest to those who regard Him as an ordinary man. The twenty-fifth verse seems to express that He is also veiled by divine potency. So He has declared in the twenty-sixth verse that His knowledge is not veiled. People don't know Him because of their attachment and aversion (7/27). But those, who are freed from delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites, worship Him with a firm resolve (7/28). Those who, taking refuge in Him, strive to know Him in His entire form at last attain Him (7/29-30).

If we delve deep in this chapter we come to know that there is the description of inclination and disinclination for God. Those who have disinclination for God and inclination for Matter, follow the wheel of birth and death. But if they have inclination for God, they know the Lord who is endowed with attributes and is formless, who is attributeless and formless and also who is endowed with attributes and form in His entire form and at last attain Him.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे ज्ञानविज्ञानयोगो नाम सप्तमोऽध्यायः ॥ ७ ॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagvadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde jñānavijñānayogo nāma saptamo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ, Tat, Sat the names of the Lord, in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavadgītā, the Yoga and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, this is the seventh discourse designated: "The Yoga of Knowledge and Realization".

In this chapter there is the description of knowledge and realization. The belief that the Lord is the root of the entire universe is knowledge, while realization is that in the entire universe there is nothing besides the Lord. By knowledge and realization a devotee comes to know his real and eternal affinity for God i.e.,

"I am God's and God is mine." Therefore, this chapter is designated: "The Yoga of Knowledge and Realization."

Words, letters and Uvāca (said) in the Seventh Chapter—

1. In this chapter in **'Atha saptamo'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are three words, in **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** there are two words, in verses there are four hundred and six words and there and thirteen concluding words. Thus the total number of the words is four hundred and twenty-four.
2. In **'Atha saptamo'dhyāyaḥ'** there are seven letters, in **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** there are seven letters, in verses there are nine hundred and sixty letters and there are forty-eight concluding letters. Thus the total number of the letters is one thousand and twenty-two. Each of the verses is of thirty-two letters.
3. In this chapter there is one **Uvāca** (said) **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'.**

Metres Used in the Seventh Chapter

Out of the thirty verses of this chapter in the third quarter of the sixth verse and first quarter of the fourteenth verse 'na-gaṇa' being used, there is **'na-vipulā'** metre; in the third quarter of the eleventh verse and first quarter of the twenty-fifth verse 'ma-gaṇa' being used there is **'ma-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the seventeenth verse 'ra-gaṇa' being used there is **'ra-vipulā'** metre and in the third quarter of the nineteenth and twentieth verses 'bha-gaṇa' being used there is **'bha-vipulā'** metre. The remaining twenty-three verses are possessed of the characteristics of right **'pathyāvaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

Śrī Hariḥ

EIGHTH CHAPTER

Introduction

Lord Kṛṣṇa at the end of the seventh chapter while describing His entire form used the six words Brahma, Adhyātma, Karma, Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva and Adhiyajña and explained that the Yogīs who know Him in His entire form attain Him. For getting the clarification of these six words Arjuna at the beginning of the eighth chapter puts seven questions.

अर्जुन उवाच

किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।
अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते ॥ १ ॥
अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसूदन ।
प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥ २ ॥

arjuna uvāca

kiṁ tadbrahma kimadhyātmaṁ kiṁ karma puruṣottama
adhibhūtaṁ ca kiṁ proktamadhidaivaṁ kimucyate
adhiyajñaḥ kathaṁ ko'tra dehe'sminmadhusūdana
prayāṇakāle ca kathaṁ jñeyo'si niyatātmabhiḥ

Arjuna said:

What is that Brahma? What is Adhyātma? What is Karma (Action)? O Best among men! What is said to be Adhibhūta and what is called Adhidaiva? Who and how is Adhiyajña here in this body, O Kṛṣṇa? And how are You to be realized at the time of death by persons of steadfast mind? 1-2

Comment:

'Puruṣottama kiṁ tadbrahma'—O Best among men! What do You mean by the term 'Brahma'?

'Kimadhyātmam'—What is meant by 'Adhyātma'?

'Kiṁ karma'—What do You mean by 'Karma'?

'Adhibhūtaṁ ca kiṁ proktam'—What does the term 'Adhibhūta' mean?

'Adhidaivaṁ kimucyate' —What is 'Adhidaiva'?

'Adhiyajñaḥ kathaṁ ko'tra dehesmin'—What is 'Adhiyajña' and how is it in this body ?

'Madhusūdana prayāṇakāle ca kathaṁ jñeyo'si niyatātmabhiḥ' — O Destroyer of the demon named Madhu, how are You to be realized at the time of death by those of steadfast mind i.e, by those who having a disinclination for the world worship You with exclusive devotion? Which of Your forms do they know and how?

Link:–Lord Kṛṣṇa in the next two verses answers the six questions one by one.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ।
भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥ ३ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca
akṣaraṁ brahma paramaṁ svabhāvo'dhyātmamucyate
bhūtabhāvodbhavakaro visargaḥ karmasaṁjñitaḥ

The Blessed Lord said:

The Supreme Imperishable is Brahma; one's own self (soul) is called Adhyātma, the discharge of spirit which brings forth the existence of beings is called Karma (Action). 3

Comment:

'Akṣaraṁ brahma paramam'— The Supreme Imperishable is called 'Brahma'. Though in the Gītā the term 'Brahma' has been used for 'Praṇava' (the holy mono syllable 'Oṁ'), Veda (sacred scriptures of the Hindus) and Prakṛti (Matter) etc., yet here it has been used for the Supreme, Imperishable, attributeless-formless Lord.

'Svabhāvo'dhyātmamucyate'—One's own nature or self is called 'Adhyātma'. The path of spirituality is also called 'Adhyātma' and the science of the soul viz., metaphysics is also called 'Adhyātma' (Gītā 10/32). But here it has been used for one's self.

'Bhūtabhāvodbhavakaro visargaḥ karmasaṁjñitaḥ'—The pursuit of mind of the Lord (viz., the renunciation) that is the immediate cause of man having come into existence is called 'Karma'.

At the time of final annihilation Prakṛti (Primordial Matter or Nature) is supposed to be inactive while at the time of creation Prakṛti is supposed to be active. The cause of this activity is the Lord's pursuit of mind to become many fold from one. This pursuit of mind is the cause of the creation. At the time of final annihilation beings with egoism and collected actions merge into Nature and then Nature including beings merges into God. To activate the merged Nature from the Lord's pursuit of mind there is discharge or renunciation which is the cause of man having come into existence and his making progress in the field of actions.

Lord Kṛṣṇa in the fourteenth chapter declares, "My Prakṛti (Nature) is the womb of all creatures; in that I place the seed (germ) (14/3-4). Here 'placing the seed' means that the Lord connects the souls with the bodies according to the fruit of the actions of their previous births. The bodies are born of Nature and in the bodies the soul is the fragment of God (Gītā 15/7). Thus all beings are born by the union of Nature and God.

In the twenty-sixth verse of the thirteenth chapter the Lord declares, "Whatever being animate or inanimate, is born, know that as emanated from the union of 'Kṣetra' (Matter) and 'Kṣetrajña' (Spirit or Soul)". The Lord's pursuit of mind is the cause of this union. In that pursuit of mind there is no pride of the Lord. He has that pursuit of mind when the past influences of the actions of the previous births of beings at the time of final annihilation get mature to bear fruit.* In this way the actions of beings inspire the Lord to have pursuit of mind to change Himself into many fold forms from one. All the actions performed by the persons of different 'Varṇas' (castes) are

* Beings while working continuously get tired and sleep in spite of having their pride of doership, attachment for the fruit of actions and collected actions. After sleep their tiredness is removed and their bodies, senses, minds and intellects are refreshed and they regain energy to work. Similarly, beings with the pride of doership, attachment for the fruit of actions and collected actions merge into Nature. The accumulated actions of those beings with the passage of time by becoming mature bear fruit. There the Lord has His pursuit of mind to give them birth according to their actions. His pursuit is called 'Action.'

called 'Karma'. It means that the important action is the Lord's pursuit of mind and then the chain of actions begins.

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम्।
अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभृतां वर ॥ ४ ॥

adhibhūtaṁ kṣaro bhāvaḥ puruṣaścādhidaivatam
adhiyajño'hamevātra dehe dehabhṛtāṁ vara

O best of the embodied, all perishable objects are Adhibhūta, Brahmā is Adhidaiva; and I, dwelling as the inner witness in this body, am Adhiyajña. 4

Comment:

'Adhibhūtaṁ kṣaro bhāvaḥ'—The kaleidoscopic and perishable universe consisting of the five subtle elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether is called 'Adhibhūta'.

'Puruṣaścādhidaivatam'—Here the term 'Adhidaiva' has been used for Brahmā. At the beginning of the creation by God's pursuit of mind there is revelation of Brahmā, the creator of the world and then he creates the universe.

'Adhiyajño'hamevātra dehe dehabhṛtāṁ vara'—O best of the embodied, Arjuna! In this body I am Adhiyajña i.e., I dwell as the inner witness in this body*. Lord Kṛṣṇa has declared the same again, "I am specially seated in the hearts of all" (13/17), "I am installed in the hearts of all" (15/15), "The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings"(18/61).

'Ahameva atra†dehe' means that in other bodies, beings reap the fruit of their previous actions and are not free to perform new actions while in human body new actions are performed due to the Lord's inspiration‡. The actions which are performed by the Lord's inspiration, being free from attachment and aversion, are pure and they don't lead a man to bondage while the actions performed by having attachment and aversion lead to bondage because they are not performed because of the Lord's inspiration. The reason is that attachment and aversion are verily man's enemies (Gītā 3/34). It means that forbidden actions can never be performed with God's inspiration. The scriptures and jurisprudence contain the inspiration (Command) of the Lord. Forbidden actions are performed under the sway of desire (Gītā 3/37). If a man is not the victim of desire, he will perform actions which are sanctioned by the scriptures and which have been called actions .ordained by one's own nature or innate actions in the eighteenth chapter.

By using 'Dehabhṛtāṁ vara' for Arjuna, Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to convey that the man who knows that the Lord is installed in the body is the best. Even if he does not know he should assume that in each atom of physical, subtle and causal bodies the Lord pervades and the aim of human life is to realize Him. To attain that aim he should carry out the command of the Lord by performing actions.

The terms 'Brahma', 'Adhyātma' 'Karma', 'Adhibhūta' 'Adhidaiva' and 'Adhiyajña'

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* He dwells in the body. It means that the human body has discrimination and is capable of realizing God while other beings' discrimination is not aroused and they can't attain God-Realization, though the Lord also dwells in their bodies. So a human being by utilizing this life should realize God in this very birth.

† In the second verse the term 'Atra' (Here) has been used for the context and the term 'Asmin' (This) for the body but here the term 'Atra' has been used for the body, because while putting the question Arjuna has given a hint of the context, therefore there is no need for using the term 'Atra' in the answer.

‡ The Lord gives inspiration to human beings according to their nature. A man is free to be or not to be under the sway of attachment and aversion. He by depending on the scriptures, saints and the Lord can change his nature.

can be explained by giving the illustration of water. When the sky is clear, we feel that there is nothing between us and the sun, yet there are atoms (molecules) of water. Water is transformed into clouds by evaporation. The cloud turns to drops of rain. Those drops at a low temperature are frozen into snow. Similarly, the attributeless and formless Brahma (the Absolute) is like molecules of water, Adhiyajña (All Pervading Lord Viṣṇu) is water as vapour, Adhidaiva (Brahmā) is water as cloud, Adhyātma (Infinite embodied soul) is water as rain, Karma (creation of the universe) is the activity of rain and Adhibhūta (perishable world) is water as snow.

It means that as water takes different forms, the Lord also transforms Himself into different forms. This knowledge about Him is full (7/1) and so the man of realization realizes that all this is God (7/19).

Though in essence there is nothing besides the Lord, yet by our discrimination we see two parts, the body and the soul. A devotee perceives the Lord, (the Adored), the devotee (soul) and Matter (the world). These three have been divided into six.

The Lord — Brahma (Attributeless) and Adhiyajña (Endowed with attributes).

The soul of two kinds—Adhyātma (Embodied soul which is bound) and Adhidaiva (Kāraka Puruṣa, a liberated soul).

The world has two forms—Actions (heap of change) and Adhibhūta (Matter).

1. Brahma	→	←	6. Adhiyajña
2. Adhyātma	→	←	5. Adhidaiva
3. Karma (Action)	→	←	4. Adhibhūta

An Important Fact

(1)

In the Gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa has declared His existence in different ways "All this is permeated by Me" (9/4); "By whom all this is pervaded"(18/46);"There is nothing else besides Me"(7/7); 'All this is God" (7/19); "I am the enjoyer and the Lord of all sacrifices"(9/24); "I am the enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all the worlds" (5/29). Now let us think how to bring them into harmony.

All the strivers* in the world want to attain God by being free from the bondage of the world because they want to attain the state of eternal peace and bliss, while the worldly people having affinity for the world always suffer from disquietude and sorrows. The Lord is the abode of infinite bliss, this is mentioned in the scriptures and the saints have also realized it.

Now the question arises that the world is clearly visible while a striver has to assume the existence of God Who is invisible. The striver starts adoration by believing in the scriptures and the saints because they declare, "The Lord pervades the entire universe." So long as he attaches primary importance to the world, the Lord gets the secondary place. But by and by, when by constant devotion, his belief gets a firm footing about the existence of God, the striver visualizes that the world is perishing continuously. Finally he perceives that the world merely appears but has ever been non-existent and the Lord existed in the past, exists now and will exist in future because He is eternal and in the world there is nothing besides Him. When a striver realizes "All is God" he becomes a 'Siddha' (perfect soul).

(2)

The Lord is being and non-being both (9/19); He is said to be neither being nor non-being (13/12); He is the being and the non-being and also beyond the two (11/37). Now how to harmonize the different statements?

In fact the Lord is very uncommon and unique. He can't be perceived by senses, mind and intellect, they can merge into Him. The striver himself can also merge into Him and attain Him but can't control Him.

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* Strivers are those who want to attain the state of perfect peace and infinite bliss, totally free from turmoil and sorrows. But the worldly people are those who hanker after worldly prosperity and pleasures and thus follow the cycle of birth and death.

There are two kinds of strivers—having predominance of discrimination (mind) and those having predominance of faith (devotion) (heart). But it does not mean that the former has no faith at all and the latter no discrimination at all. In the former there is predominance of discrimination while faith is secondary. In the latter there is predominance of faith while discrimination is secondary. In other words it can be said that the former first knows and then assumes while the latter first assumes and then knows.

A striver whether he follows the path of discrimination or that of faith, can attain his aim quickly if he has taste, faith (belief) and capability. Because of interest, the mind is naturally motivated; because of faith (belief), intellect is naturally motivated and because of capability truth is understood. The strivers having predominance of discrimination adore the Lord Who is attributeless and formless while the latter ones adore the Lord endowed with attributes and form. The former says that He is neither being nor non-being while the latter believes that He is the being, the non-being and also beyond the two.

Thus we conclude that the Lord (Pure-consciousness) ever remains the same while the perishable world changes continuously. When a man attaches importance to the perishable world by having affinity for it, he has to follow the cycle of birth and death. But when he breaks up his affinity for the world, he realizes God. The striver having predominance of discrimination breaks off affinity for the world (Matter) by applying his discrimination and then Pure Consciousness remains while a devotee having faith in Him by having disinclination for the world attains Him through devotion. The former by being established in the Absolute Who is All-Truth, All-Consciousness and All-Bliss attains indestructible and infinite bliss while the latter by becoming one with Him attains infinite and ever enhancing bliss of love.

Thus both the strivers by renouncing their affinity for the world attain Pure-Consciousness and realize that the Lord is being and non-being both.

Link:–In the second verse Arjuna's seventh question was "How is one to realize you at the time of death?" Lord Kṛṣṇa answers this question in the next verse.

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम्।
यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥ ५ ॥

antakāle ca māmeva smaranmuktvā kalevaram
yaḥ prayāti sa madbhāvaṁ yāti nāstyatra saṁśayaḥ

He who departs from the body thinking of (remembering) Me alone, even at the time of death, attains Me, there is no doubt about it. 5

Comment:

'Antakāle ca māmeva smaran-muktvā kalevaram yaḥ prayāti sa madbhāvaṁ yāti nāstyatra saṁśayaḥ'—It means that the Lord by bestowing this human body upon man gave him an apportunity to attain salvation through adoration. But he didn't avail himself of the opportunity. Now being helpless the only way open to him is to realize Him by remembering Him while breathing his last.

'Māmeva smaran' means that whatever a striver hears, sees, understands and assumes is nothing besides the Lord. By assuming so whatever a striver thinks at the time of death is nothing else besides the Lord. Thus if a striver thinks of Him at the time of death, he will attain Him.

'Madbhāvam' means that the striver attains the state of Godhood whether he is a dualist or a non-dualist—this is in accordance

with the remembrance at the last moment. Such God may be endowed with attributes or attributeless, endowed with form or formless, two-armed or four-armed etc., according to the worship.

The worshippers of the Lord attain Him by thinking of Him at the time of death. But even to the minds of those who don't worship Him if some how or the other His thought comes, they also attain Him. As a person remains established in a mode of Nature (14/18) and as he dies during the predominance of Nature born qualities (Modes) of Sattva (Goodness) or Raja (Passion) or Tama, (Ignorance) he gains the same kind of world (Gītā 14/14-15), the devotee who at the time of death remembers God, attains Him. At last the devotees following different disciplines of worship become one i.e., attain the same Lord while the persons having predominance of anyone of the three Nature born modes gain the worlds according to the mode they possess viz., follow the cycle of birth and death.

This is a special favour granted by the Lord that a man at the time of death by remembering Him will attain Him even though his conduct and life have been vicious because the only aim of this human life is God-Realization. Otherwise it is a disgrace to the Lord Who has bestowed this human life and also to the person who has received it. Therefore it is a warning to every person that he should be careful to remember Him all the time because any time can be the time of death as it keeps no calendar. In Ethics it is mentioned that if a man wants to follow righteousness and attain salvation, he should always remember that he is in the grip of death.

A man should utilize the special concession granted to him by God. If there is a person on the death-bed, he should be shown the picture of his favourite Deity, the name of his Deity should be chanted and he should be reminded of his Deity's form. The spiritual atmosphere should be created so that the messengers of the god of death may not approach him. Ajāmila recited the name of the Lord 'Nārāyaṇa' and so the messengers of God approached while the messengers of the god of death fled away. Then the god of death said to his messengers, "Where there is constant remembrance, loud chanting or narration of the stories of the Lord, never go there because that place is out of our domain." By saying so the god of death by thinking of God tendered an apology to Him in these words, "O Lord, pardon my messengers for the offence they have committed" (Śrīmadbhā. 6/3/30).

'He thinks of Him at the time of death'. It means that he may remember anyone of His forms as that of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Durgā, Gaṇeśa or His name, place, qualities or comedies. By thinking of Him a person attains Him because by remembering God he forgets "I am the body and the body is mine."

Now a doubt arises how a man, who has not worshipped the Lord throughout his life, can remember Him at the time of death. The clarification is that either by God's special grace or by beholding a saint or by listening to the name, comedy, character of the Lord or the scriptures he may think of God and thus may attain Him. If he is interested in the Gītā and he is on the death-bed, the eighth chapter should be recited to him so that he may think of God at that time as there is a special description of the glory of thinking of Him at the time of death. The reason is that being a fragment of the Lord his affinity for Him is natural. Similarly if he dies at a place of pilgrimage such as Ayodhyā, Mathurā, Haridvāra, Kāśī etc., he will remember the Lord because of the influence of that place of pilgrimage. He can also think of God at the last moment at the place where the spiritual atmosphere of constant remembrance, loud chanting and stories of the Lord prevails and where spiritual discourses are held. Some terrifying situation can also remind the man of God. If at the time of death he somehow or the other takes refuge in Him, he attains Him. If all of a sudden he thinks of his salvation,

he may attain salvation. Similarly, if a striver recites the name of the Lord to some one at the time of his death, he may attain salvation. In the scriptures it is mentioned that if a saint beholds either a man on the death-bed, or his dead body or the smoke of his burning pyre or the ash of his pyre, he attains salvation.*

An Important Fact

In the third and fourth verses of this chapter the six terms such as Brahma and Adhyātma etc., reveal the Lord in His all comprehensive forms indicating that all is God. Thus the great soul who has realized that in this world there is nothing else besides the Lord, has not to remember Him at the time of death as he is all the time—wakeful state, dream, sound sleep-instinctively conscious of His eternal presence in the same way as a common man always remembers "I am".

He may live at any place, holy or unholy, at any time, the day or night, in any state, wakefulness, sleep, sound sleep, unconsciousness, sickness, health etc., and in any circumstances, he will certainly attain salvation.

Besides the above mentioned great souls, the strivers, who worship the Lord in His different forms and names by remembering anyone of His names or forms or Comedies or places, will attain Him.

Besides them other believers who some how or the other think of God at the time of death, though they are not engaged continuously in His worship, also attain Him.

Thus the remedy of remembering the Lord at the time of death is not applicable to liberated souls but only to strivers and common people.

Link:–He who thinks of the Lord at the time of death attains Him. What becomes of those who don't think of the Lord but think of some one else? The answer follows in the next verse.

यं यं वापि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम्।
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ॥ ६ ॥

yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaranbhāvaṁ tyajatyante kalevaram
taṁ tamevaiti kaunteya sadā tadbhāvabhāvitaḥ

Whatever being (object) a man thinks of at the time of death when he leaves the body, that alone does he attain, O kaunteya (Arjuna), being ever absorbed in the thought thereof. 6

Comment:

'Yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaranbhāvaṁ tyajatyante kalevaram taṁ tamevaiti kaunteya sadā tadbhāvabhāvitaḥ'—In this ordinance of the Lord there is His unique grace that a man may attain Him merely by thinking of Him at the time of death. If he thinks of a dog, he gets birth as a dog but if he thinks of the Lord, he attains Him. How easily attainable the Lord is!

'Sadā tadbhāvabhāvitaḥ'—Whatever being a man thinks of at the time of death, he obtains the same body because before obtaining the other body he has no opportunity, no power, no freedom to change the thought which he has at the time of death. So he remains engrossed in the same thought. Then he with air, water or food etc., enters the body of the man for whose actions he has even the least affinity. Then from the body of

* . Once a religious minded gentleman was offering a little holy water of the Ganges to the people. One of the persons said that he would not be purified of his numberless sins with such a small quantity of holy water. He demanded a jug of that holy water. When he was offered it he drank it and said that he would be purged of his sins. At the time of death his life breath passed through the tenth door and he attained salvation (This anecdote was narrated by a striver).

the man he enters the body of the woman and takes birth. If a man thinks of a dog at the time of death, he takes birth as a dog. But it does not mean that by thinking of a house or wealth, he is born as a house or wealth. It means that if he dies while thinking of a house, he is born as a rat or a lizard in that house and if he thinks of wealth at the time of death, he is born as a snake. It means that a person by thinking of a non-living object at the time of death is born as a living being having connection with that non-living object.

The other creatures such as birds and animals etc., remember the objects or beings according to their actions at the time of death and are reborn accordingly. But the singularity of human body is that his thinking at the last moment does not depend on his actions but on his own self. He is free in having his affinity for anyone. If he has his affinity for the Lord and remembers Him at the time of death, all his artificial and assumed affinity for the worldly beings and objects breaks up and he attains Him because his affinity for Him is axiomatic.

An Important Fact

(1)

A being is reborn in the body he thinks of, at the time of death. As a man rearing a domestic dog thinks of it at the time of death, he is born as a dog. As the programme broadcast from a particular radio station is received at a particular wave-length and then spreads in the form of sound, the thought of the dog with which he has been connected in any way is caught by him. Then the soul with subtle and causal bodies enters the body of the dog with water, air (breath) or food etc. Then it enters the body of the bitch and takes birth as a dog at the ripe time.

It can be explained with the help of an illustration. A person goes to a photographer and requests him to take his photograph. The photographer advises him to have a smiling face without any movement. But when the photographer asks him to be ready, a fly sits on his nose and so he puckers his face in order to remove that fly. The result is that he gets the photograph with a puckered face. In the same way a man is reborn according to the thought at the time of death.

As far as the time for the photograph is concerned we know it before hand, but we don't know the time of death. So by purifying our nature and thoughts, we should ever be alert and think of Him at all times (Gītā 8/5,7).

(2)

In this ordinance of the Lord there is His justice as well as grace. Generally justice and grace seem incompatible because if there is justice, there can't be grace (mercy). But this rule is applicable to human beings, not to the Lord because He is the most gracious one and is the disinterested friend of all beings (Gītā 5/29). So all His ordinances and rules are full of justice and mercy.

Whatever being a man thinks of at the time of death, he gets the same form as rebirth. If he dies thinking of a dog, he is reborn as a dog. This is His justice. But He has given freedom to man to think either of a dog or of a man or of God, this is His mercy. A man can attain God just by thinking of Him, as he can obtain the body of a dog by thinking of it. If a man starts thinking of His justice and grace, he will be attracted towards Him alone.

Link:–When a man gains the body according to his thought at the time of death, what should he do to remember God? The way is indicated in the next verse.

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मामेवैष्यस्यसंशयम् ॥ ७ ॥

tasmātsarveṣu kāleṣu māmanusmara yudhya ca
mayyarpitamanobuddhirmāmevaiṣyasyasaṁśayam

Therefore, think of Me at all times and fight. Mind and intellect thus surrendered to Me, you will surely come to Me. 7

Comment:

'Tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu māmanusmara yudhya ca'—Here the terms 'Ṣarveṣu kāleṣu' have been used for thinking, not for fight because any action can't be performed at all times as every action has a beginning and an end, it is everyone's experience. But being ever conscious of the aim of God-Realization, He is thought of at all times.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna to think of Him at all times, He means to say that as there is division of time for other activities such as having meals, taking sleep and earning livelihood etc., there is no division of time in thinking of the Lord. He should be thought of at all times.

The expression 'Yudhya ca' (And fight) has been used to tell Arjuna that he has obtained such an unsolicited opportunity for war (Gītā 2/32). So he should perform this duty by thinking of God. But in it thought of God is primary while performance of the duty is secondary.

'Anusmara' means constant remembrance of God. The second interpretation is that God does not forget any being because He has declared in the seventh chapter, "I know all beings" (7/26). When He knows all beings, it is natural for Him to think of them. Therefore, if this being thinks of Him, he attains salvation. In order to be able to remember God one must have a feeling of intense love for Him. The more intense this feeling of love is, the oftener will His remembrance come to his mind.

'Mayyarpitamanobudhiḥ'— Generally it means that the striver should surrender his mind and intellect to Him viz., he should think of God with his mind and have a determination with his intellect to realize Him. But it really means that a striver should never think the mind, intellect, senses and body as his own even by an error, because all the worldly things belong to God. So long as a striver goes on thinking that they are his own, they can't be purified. The thought of accepting them as one's own is the main impurity which gives birth to other impurities.

In fact a man has his affinity only for God because he is His eternal portion. So how can he have any affinity for Nature (Matter)? A striver by thinking the mind and intellect as God's, should surrender them to Him. Then naturally he will realize God. Because he had a disinclination for Him as he had an affinity for Nature (Matter) and its evolutes — the body, mind, intellect etc., and affinity for them was the stumbling block.

Some of the philosophers regard the worldly things as God's while others regard them as Prakṛti's (Nature's) but all of them agree that they are not men's. Therefore, a striver by thinking them of God's, should surrender them to Him. By doing so his eternal affinity for God will be aroused.

'Māmevaiṣyasyasaṁśayam'— By surrendering your mind and intellect to Me, you will attain Me without any doubt, because I am ever attained to you. But you are unable to realize this fact because you have accepted your affinity for the body and the world. So if you surrender the mind, intellect and yourself to Me, your eternal affinity for Me will be revealed, there is no doubt about it."

Some Impotant Facts About Remembrance

Remembrance is of three kinds —born of knowledge, born of affinity, and born of action. Remembrance born of knowledge never ends. Remembrance born of affinity continues so long as affinity continues but remembrance born of action is not constant.

Their description in detail is as follows:

(i) Remembrance born of knowledge—We have not to remember 'I am'. But we commit an error by identifying ourselves with the body. By knowledge this error is wiped out and the knowledge of 'I am' remains. In the Gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, "There was never a time when I or you and these kings were non-existent; nor is it that we shall cease to be in future" (Gītā 2/12). "This multitude of beings, being born again and again, is dissolved at the commencement of Brahmā's night and rises again at the commencement of his day" (8/19). In it 'this multitude of being' is the portion of God and 'what is dissolved and born, is body. If we renounce our assumed affinity for this perishable body, our remembrance born of knowledge remains constant.

(ii) Remembrance born of affinity–Actually we have our real affinity for God, not for the body and the world, because we are His eternal portion. But by accepting our affinity for the body and the world we don't realize our real affinity for God. As soon as we deny the assumed affinity, our real eternal affinity for the Lord is automatically aroused and then there is constant remembrance of the Lord.

(iii) Remembrance born of action or practice—It depends on practice. Ladies in villages carrying the pitcher full of water talk and walk but are careful about the pitcher. An acrobat while dancing and speaking remains careful of the rope. A motor driver while driving, changing the gear, handling the steering and talking to the conductor etc., remains careful about the path. All this depends on practice. Thus remembrance of God while performing different actions is remembrance born of practice. This remembrance born of practice is also of three kinds — (a) Remembrance of God while performing mundane actions. In it primary importance is attached to actions and secondary to remembrance of God.

(b) Performing actions while remembering God. In it primary importance is attached to the remembrance of God and secondary to actions. Here a person remains careful that he should not forget God even though the worldly action is not performed properly.

(c) Performing actions thinking them as God's. While performing actions a striver thinks that he is fortunate enough that he is rendering service to God through actions because the actions are His. So he has sweet remembrance of God just like a father who while performing different actions for his daughter's marriage, remembers his daughter.

Spiritual pursuits are of two kinds—(i) Utterance of His name, loud chanting, listening to his comedies, thinking of Him and reading the scriptures. (ii) Performance of actions thinking them as God's in order to please Him without any selfish motive in accordance with the ordinance of the scriptures. Such actions are also included in spiritual pursuits.

[At the end of the seventh chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa while describing His entire form told seven facts. On those seven facts Arjuna put seven questions at the beginning of the eighth chapter and this topic is also over in seven verses].

Link:–Remembrance (Thinking) born of practice mentioned in the previous verse is described in the next verse.

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।
परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ॥ ८ ॥

abhyāsayogayuktena cetasā nānyagāminā
paramaṁ puruṣaṁ divyaṁ yāti pārthānucintayan

O Pārtha (Arjuna) he who with his mind established in Yoga in the form of practice of meditation, thinking of nothing else, is constantly engaged in contemplation of the Supreme Divine Puruṣa (God), attains Him. 8

Comment:

[In the twenty-eighth verse of the seventh chapter the Lord endowed with attributes and formless, Who was described in short has been described in detail in the eighth, ninth and tenth verses here].

'Abhyāsayogayuktena'—In this expression there are two words 'Abhyāsa' (Practice) and 'Yoga' (Equanimity). Practice means repeated concentration of the mind on God by diverting it from the world while Yoga means equanimity — 'Equanimity is called Yoga" (Gītā 2/48). The concentration of the mind results in joy while its diversion results in sadness. This is called practice, rather than the Yoga of practice. It is called Yoga of practice only when there is equanimity in joy and sorrow. A striver instead of attaching importance to joy and sadness should attach importance to his goal. This is establishment of mind in Yoga.

'Cetasā nānyagāminā'—He should think of nothing else viz., he should have no aim other than God-Realization.

'Paramaṁ puruṣaṁ divyaṁ yāti pārthānucintayan'—With such a mind constantly engaged in contemplation of the Supreme Divine Puruṣa viz., God endowed with attributes and formless, a striver attains Him.

Link:–Now for concentration the Lord describes God Who is formless and is endowed with attributes.

कविं पुराणमनुशासितार-
मणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेद्यः ।
सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूप-
मादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥ ९ ॥

kaviṁ purāṇamanuśāsitāra
maṇoraṇīyāṁsamanusmaredyaḥ
sarvasya dhātāramacintyarūpa-
mādityavarṇaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt

He who contemplates on the Omniscient, the Ancient, the Ruler, minuter than an atom, Sustainer of all, of Form inconceivable, Shining like the sun and beyond all darkness of ignorance. 9

Comment:

'Kavim'—The Lord is Omniscient because He knows all the beings and their good and evil actions.

'Purāṇam'—He is the most ancient because He is the origin of everything sentient and insentient.

'Anuśāsitāram'—He is the Ruler and Illuminator of all the senses, mind, intellect and ego. Secondly, He, through the scriptures, preceptors and saints, orders men to perform their duties and by creating favourable and unfavourable circumstances according to their virtuous and evil actions, purifies them. He is called the Ruler as He makes the ordinance for prescription and prohibition and also destroys their old actions in the form of virtues and sins by enabling them to reap their fruits.

'Aṇoraṇīyāṁsam'—The Lord is subtler than even an atom. He is the subtlest of the subtle. He is beyond the reach of mind and intellect. Even Nature can't be perceived by them because they are the evolutes of Nature. So how can they have an access to the subtlest Lord?

'Sarvasya dhātāram'—He is the supporter and sustainer of infinite universes.

So He is called the sustainer of all.

'Tamasaḥ parastāt'—He is supremely above and beyond the darkness of ignorance. He is rather the illuminator of ignorance.

'Āditya varṇam'—His colour is like the sun i.e., just like the shining sun the Lord is the illuminator of minds and intellects of all beings. All beings receive light from Him.

'Acintya rūpam'—His form is inconceivable to the mind and intellect.

'Anusmaret'—It means that one should contemplate on God. God knows all the beings and so He remembers them. Therefore, they should also remember Him.

Now a doubt arises how to think of Him when He is inconceivable. The clarification is that the firm belief that He is inconceivable is in fact the thought of Him.

Link:–Now in the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains how a devotee according to the thought which he has at the time of death, reaches Him.

प्रयाणकाले मनसाचलेन
भक्त्या युक्तो योगबलेन चैव ।
भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक्
स तं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥ १० ॥

prayāṇakāle manasācalena
bhaktyā yukto yogabalena caiva
bhruvormadhye prāṇamāveśya samyak
sa taṁ paraṁ puruṣamupaiti divyam

By Yogic power firmly holding the life breath in the space between the two eye brows at the time of death, contemplating on God with a steadfast mind, full of devotion, he reaches the Supreme Divine Puruṣa (God). 10

Comment:

'Prayāṇakāle manasācalena bhaktyā yukto yogabalena caiva bhruvormadhye prāṇamāveśya samyak sa taṁ paraṁ puruṣamupaiti divyam'—Here devotion stands for attraction for the Lord and that attraction is one's own, that is not of mind and intellect etc. The Yogī contemplates on God Who is formless and is endowed with attributes.

By Yogic power he holding the life breath in the space between the two eye brows in the principal nerve called 'Suṣumṇā' which is situated in the circle with two leaves (Dvidala cakra) (leaving the body through the tenth door situated in the skull) reaches the Supreme Divine Puruṣa.

'Taṁ paraṁ puruṣamupaiti divyam'—He attains the Supreme Divine Lord Who is formless and is endowed with attributes as described in the ninth verse.

Whatever was said in brief in the eighth verse has been explained in detail in the ninth and tenth verses and thus the topic has been concluded.

In this context there is the description of the worship of the Lord Who is formless and is endowed with attributes. There is need for practice in this sort of worship. This practice is not meant for attaining accomplishments (Siddhi) but for God-Realization. This concentration of mind on God at the time of death is a tedious task which can be carried out only by one who has a full command over his life breath and mind.

A striver should first have a determination that beyond ignorance there is an unaltered–One Who is the illuminator, base and inspirer of all the beings. Then he should love Him from his heart. By doing so his mind will be concentrated on Him naturally.

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the order how to attain the Lord Who is formless and attributeless.

यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति
विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागाः ।
यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति
तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥ ११ ॥

yadakṣaraṁ vedavido vadanti
viśanti yadyatayo vītarāgāḥ
yadicchanto brahmacaryaṁ caranti
tatte padaṁ saṅgraheṇa pravakṣye

I shall speak to you in brief that goal which knowers of the Vedas term as the Imperishable, and into which enter recluses, self-controlled and free from attachment, and desiring which strivers practise celibacy. 11

Comment:

[The attributeless and formless Lord who was described in brief in the twenty-ninth verse of the seventh chapter is described in detail in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth verses].

'Yadakṣaraṁ vedavido vadanti'—That which the knowers of the Vedas term as the Imperishable—attributeless-formless and that ever remains uniform and has been called the Supreme Imperishable Brahma in the third verse of this chapter, is described here.

'Viśanti yadyatayo vītarāgāḥ'—Those striving recluses who are totally free from attachment, who have become pure and who have a yearning to attain Him, reach Him.

'Yadicchanto brahmacaryaṁ caranti'—Those whose aim is only to realize God and to realize Him they practise celibacy by controlling their senses and passions.

'Tatte padaṁ saṅgraheṇa pravakṣye'—I shall speak to you well in brief that essence which has been described in the scriptures the Supreme, the Unique, the Absolute and which is attained by worshippers. 'Speaking well' means speaking in such a way that adorers of the Absolute will attain Him.

Link:–Lord Kṛṣṇa in the next two verses explains the means to attain the attributeless formless Lord at the time of death.

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।
मूर्ध्न्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥ १२ ॥
ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन् ।
यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ १३ ॥

sarvadvārāṇi saṁyamya mano hṛdi nirudhya ca
mūrdhnyādhāyātmanaḥ prāṇamāsthito yogadhāraṇām
omityekākṣaraṁ brahma vyāharanmāmanusmaran
yaḥ prayāti tyajandehaṁ sa yāti paramāṁ gatim

Having restrained all the media of perception, fixing the mind in the heart and the life breath in the head, remaining steadfast in Yogic concentration, uttering the one syllabled Brahma 'Om' thinking of Me, he who departs leaving the body, attains the Supreme State. 12-13

Comment:

'Sarva dvārāṇi saṁyamya' —(At the time of death) One should restrain all the media of perception (should close all the gates of the body) i.e., he should restrain his ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose from the five senses of sound, touch, colour (form), taste and smell; and five organs of action—tongue, hands, feet, anus and generative organ from speaking, taking, going, passing stool and urine. Thus the senses will be restrained.

'Mano hṛdi nirudhya ca' —The mind should be fixed in the heart so that it may not hanker after sensual pleasures.

'Mūrdhnyā dhāyātmanaḥ prāṇam'— He should fix his life breath in the head i.e., by controlling his life breath he should fix it in 'Brahmarandhra' the suture on the top of the head.

'Āsthito yogadhāraṇām'—He should become steadfast in Yogic concentration i.e., he should neither use his sense-organs in performing actions nor think with his mind and have a full command over his life breath.

'Omityekākṣaraṁ brahma vyāharanmāmanusmaran'—After it he should utter the one syllabled Brahma 'Om' with his mind and think of the Supreme Imperishable Brahma Who is attributeless-formless (Who has been described in the third verse of this chapter). The thought about Him is that He pervades everywhere, all the things, persons, incidents and circumstances etc., at all times.

'Yaḥ prayāti tyajandehaṁ sa yāti paramāṁ gatim'—He who thinking of the attributeless and formless Lord, departs leaving the body (i.e., his life breath passes through the tenth door) attains the Supreme Goal viz., the attributeless and formless Lord.

Link:–The above mentioned method of attaining the attributeless and formless Lord which is subject to practice for a long time is difficult to practise for a common man. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa in the next verse explains the easy method to attain the Lord Who is endowed with attributes and form.

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।
तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥ १४ ॥

ananyacetāḥ satataṁ yo māṁ smarati nityaśaḥ
tasyāhaṁ sulabhaḥ pārtha nityayuktasya yoginaḥ

O Pārtha (Arjuna), The Yogī who constantly thinks of Me with undivided mind, always absorbed in Me, I am easily attainable. 14

Comment:

[The Lord endowed with attributes and form described in the thirtieth verse of the seventh chapter, is described in detail here in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth verses].

'Ananyacetāḥ'—The striver whose mind is not attracted in the least towards prosperity and pleasures and remains absorbed in God and who does not depend on anyone besides the Lord is of undivided mind. He depends only on God like a chaste wife who totally depends on her husband and thinks of him only, and like an obedient disciple or son who depends on his preceptor or parents only.

Such a striver worships the Lord endowed with attributes such as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, Durgā, Gaṇeśa, Sūrya (Sun-God). He without thinking of the other forms

of the Lord as different from his own, worships his favourite Deity with exclusive devotion. He has a firm belief that he is only God's and only God is his; he is of none else and noneelse is his.

'Satatam yo mām smarati nityaśaḥ'—'Satatam' means 'Constantly' from the time he is awake to the time he gets to sleep. 'Nityaśaḥ' means always i.e., he thinks of Him from the day he knew Him to the day he dies.

'Tasyāham sulabhaḥ pārtha nityayuktasya yoginaḥ'—I am easily attainable to such a devotee who is absorbed in Me. 'Absorbed in Me' doesn't mean that his mind constantly dwells on Me. But it means that he is devoted to Me in a detached spirit with full faith and love. For instance a Brāhmaṇa by caste always remembers that he is a Brāhmaṇa, not a Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya. He remains a Brāhmaṇa whether he thinks of it or not. Similarly a devotee has a firm belief that he is only Mine and only I am his. He who maintains this affinity is called 'absorbed in Me.' His senses, body, mind, intellect etc., are not his. If he accepts his body and mind etc., his own, I can't be easily attainable to him.

The fact is that we have identity with the Lord, not with the world. Our identity with the world is impossible. But by an error we identify ourselves with bodies and think that the Lord is separate from us. The result is that we have to follow the cycle of birth and death. But if we realize the reality, the Lord can be easily attainable to us.

From the eighth verse to the thirteenth verse the Lord explained that a striver should think of the Lord Who is formless and endowed with attributes as well as attributeless-formless. He can be attained by restraining the life breath. But at the time of death the process of restraining the breath is difficult, and it is easy to think of Him. The man is an eternal fragment of the Lord and he has had his natural affinity for Him from time immemorial. This affinity is not subject to practice and action. So by realizing this real and natural affinity for the Lord he with his body, senses, mind and intellect should surrender himself to Him. By doing so he need not worry in the least about his salvation or attaining the Supreme Goal in the same way as there is no worry in case of damage or destruction of an article if it is insured. There is no difficulty in it. Therefore, the Lord has declared that He is easily attainable to such a striver.

Link:–In the next two verses Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the merit of His realization.

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम्।
नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः॥ १५॥

māmupetya punarjanma duḥkhālayamaśāśvatam
nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ saṁsiddhiṁ paramāṁ gatāḥ

Having attained Me, the great souls are no more subject to rebirth, which is transitory and the abode of pain; for they have reached the highest perfection. 15

Comment:

'Māmupetya punarjanma duḥkhālayamaśāśvatam nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ saṁsiddhiṁ paramāṁ gatāḥ'—If a great soul has vision of the Lord or knows the reality about Him or enters into Him, he is not subject to rebirth as a man or an animal or a bird etc., because rebirth is the abode of pains.

When a man is reborn, he has to suffer so much of pain as a man whose skin is stripped off does. But at that time he is unable to express his pain. He simply weeps. When he grows, he feels very sad as his

desires are not satisfied. When he fails in the examination, he is so much dejected that he thinks even to commit suicide. In youth he feels afflicted on not being married according to his wish. On being married he feels sad not finding the spouse of his choice. When girls attain puberty, parents are obsessed with anxiety for not being able to arrange their marriage. Similarly, he feels much perturbed during his married life when he finds himself unable to rear the members of his family with the limited resources. In old age besides suffering from diseases he has to bear insult. He develops cough and can't sleep properly. At the time of death also he has to suffer a lot of pain. Thus there is no end of pains for him.

Just like men, animals and birds etc., have also to suffer a lot of pain in cold, hot and rainy seasons. The bigger animals kill the young ones of the smaller animals. Thus they are very sad. In this way creatures have to suffer in hells and eighty-four lac forms of lives. Therefore, rebirth has been called the abode of pain.

Rebirth is called transitory because in the bodies there is a continuous change. No body is permanent, it dies. So rebirth is called the path of the world of death (Gītā 9/3).

Lord Kṛṣna might have only said "Having come to Me, the great souls are no more subject to rebirth." Why has He used the two adjectives 'Transitory' and 'Abode of pain'? By these adjectives He means to say that as the Lord incarnates for the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of evil-doers and for the establishment of Dharma (Righteousness), similarly, the liberated souls as saints are born on this earth for the protection of the good, for the service of the evil doers and for enabling the people to follow righteousness or when the Lord incarnates, with Him they take birth as His courtiers or companions (like the Gvālās) on the earth. But their birth is not transitory and the abode of pain because their birth is not the fruit of their actions but is by the sweet will of the Lord.

The Lord has called great souls, to the strivers who possess divine nature (9/13), to the man of realization (7/19) and to those who have attained highest perfection (8/15). It means that men are petty souls by having their affinity for the unreal body and the world because they depend on the body and the world. They are souls when they are established in the self because in that case there is possibility of their having 'egoism' in its subtle form. But when they identify themselves with the Lord by total surrender to Him, without having any independent existence of their own, they are great souls.

Lord Kṛṣna in the Gītā in the Discipline of Action and Knowledge has not used the term 'Mahātmā' (great soul). He has used it in the Discipline of Devotion only. It means that He regards devotion as supreme.

The great souls are no more subject to rebirth because they have reached the highest perfection. As a greedy person desires to get more and more money, a devotee by recognizing the Lord whose portion he is, aspires to get more and more love and then he attains fathomless and limitless love which enhances every moment.

This love is the perfection of devotion. There is no perfection beyond it.

An Exceptional Fact

By studying the Gītā it is evident that Lord Kṛṣna has attached greatest importance to devotion. The Lord has declared "He who devoutly worships Me is considered by Me to be the best Yogī" (Gītā 6/47). "I am easily attainable to that Yogī who constantly thinks of Me with undivided mind, always absorbed in Me" (Gītā 8/14). But a striver by following anyone of the Disciplines either of Action or Knowledge or Devotion attains the same Supreme Goal. But a point needs attention that in the philosophy in which the Lord is not regarded as the Supreme, the followers by breaking off their affinity for the world attain salvation but don't attain the Supreme Love and thus don't get ever enhancing bliss or love. That ever enhancing bliss or love has been called the highest perfection here.

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।
मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥ १६ ॥

ābrahmabhuvanāllokāḥ punarāvartino'rjuna
māmupetya tu kaunteya punarjanma na vidyate

All worlds from the abode of Brahmā downwards are subject to return; O Arjuna. But O son of Kuntī, on attaining Me there is no rebirth. 16

Comment:

'Ābrahmabhuvanāllokāḥ punarāvartino'rjuna'—O Arjuna! All the worlds from the abode of Brahmā downwards are subject to return i.e., after living there at the end of the enjoyments of the fruit of their virtuous actions, men have to return.

The highest plane of existence is said to be the abode of Brahmā. In this mortal world of ours the king who possesses a prosperous kingdom, a young healthy body, no enemy, and obedient and sincere family and servants, is regarded as completely happy. The mortal gods, who as a fruit of their virtuous actions, obtain the abode of gods and after enjoying that fruit again come back to the mortal world (Gītā 9/21). They are a hundred times happier than the kings. The permanent gods (Ājāna devatā) who at the beginning of the universe were gods and continue to be gods till the end of the universe, are a hundred times happier than the mortal gods. Indra, the ruler of the gods is regarded as a hundred times happier than the permanent gods. The abode of Brahmā is supposed to possess a hundred times more happiness than Indra and the bliss of a liberated soul is regarded as a hundred times more than that of the abode of Brahmā. It means that from the highest region of Brahmā to the mortal world of the earth, happiness is limited, changing and perishable. But the bliss of God-Realization is limitless, fathomless, and permanent.

'Punarāvartinaḥ' also means that a man being the portion of God is eternal. But so long as he is unable to realize God, he even after attaining the highest plane of existence of the abode of Brahmā, has to come back.

Here a doubt rises that even by beholding devotees, saints, liberated souls and representatives of the Lord, a man attains salvation, why do people not attain salvation by beholding Brahmā in the abode of Brahmā? Why do they return? The clarification is that the concession of salvation by beholding them is applicable to the men of this mortal world only because this human body has been bestowed only for God-Realization. This concession has not been granted for the other worlds. But in those worlds also if anyone has a keen desire for salvation, he can also attain it. Even in animals and birds there have been devotees. But such cases are exceptions. Had this concession been granted in the other worlds, all those going to the hells must have attained salvation because all of them beheld 'Yamarāja', the god of death, a representative of the Lord. But there is no mention in the scriptures that they attained salvation. It proves that in other worlds a man even by beholding the liberated souls etc., does not attain salvation.

An Important Fact

This soul is an eternal portion of the Lord and after reaching the Lord's Supreme Abode, it has not to return. Then why does it return?

As a man goes to listen to the divine discourse, he comes to his house after listening to it. But if he forgets anything there, he has to go back again to take it. Similarly if this soul gets attached to wealth, property and family etc., it has to come back. The body dies, so it has to occupy place in any other body of a man or an animal or a bird etc. The Lord declares in the Gītā,

"Attachment to the three qualities (modes) born of Nature is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs" (13/21). It means that he who has desire and attachment for the world, will have to come back.

'Māmupetya tu kaunteya punarjanma na vidyate'—'All the worlds from the abode of Brahmā downwards are subject to rebirth. But on attaining Me there is no rebirth.' Here 'Māmupetya' (Having attained Me) means "See Me in reality, know Me in essence and enter into Me" (Gītā 11/54).

The soul has not to come back because being a portion of the Lord it reaches Him, and the Supreme Abode of the Lord is its real home. Its real home is not the abode of Brahmā etc., and so it has to come back from there. As a man can board a bus or a train only upto the station for which he has got the ticket and then he has to get off. Similarly a man has to come back after enjoying the fruit of his virtuous actions in the worlds of the gods. But if he is in his own house, he has not to leave it. A man can't attain salvation even after reaching the highest plane of existence. So a striver should never aspire to enjoy the pleasures of the higher worlds.

All the worlds including that of Brahmā lead the man to bondage because of the demoniacal propensities, while if the man takes refuge in God, he is liberated from the bondage because then he possesses the divine virtues only (Gītā 16/5).

An Exceptional Fact

There are two kinds of persons who go to the abode of Brahmā — those who perform virtuous deeds in order to enjoy the pleasures of the abode of Brahmā and those whose aim is to attain God but at the time of death because of having a desire for pleasure deviate from spiritual discipline and so they have to go to the world of Brahmā. The latter at the final annihilation are liberated with Brahmā after enjoying the pleasures there. This sort of liberation is called 'Krama-Mukti' (chain liberation or chain salvation) when Brahmā after his span of life vacates the place for the succeeding Brahmā. But the strivers who realize the Lord here, their salvation is called 'Sadyo-Mukti' (Quick Salvation).

In the second verse of this chapter Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, "How are You to be realized at the time of death?" Lord Kṛṣṇa answered this question in the fifth verse. In the sixth verse He explained the general rule that the predominating thought of the last moment determines his future destiny. In the seventh verse He ordered Arjuna to think of Him at all times. This seventh verse is connected with the fourteenth verse. In between (From the eighth to the thirteenth verse) there is the context of the Lord Who is endowed with attributes and is formless, and also attributeless-formless Lord.

The verses eighth to sixteenth prove that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord Who is endowed with attributes and is formless as well as the Lord Who is attributeless and formless. So the supreme aim of a man's life is to attain Him.

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa gives Brahmā, the creator's standard of time.

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्यद्ब्रह्मणो विदुः ।
रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥ १७ ॥

sahasrayugaparyantamaharyadbrahmaṇo viduḥ
rātrim yugasahasrāntām te'horātravido janāḥ

Those who know that the day of Brahmā lasts a thousand four-fold Yugas (Ages) and that his night lasts a thousand four-fold Yugas, they know the reality about Brahmā's day and night. 17

Comment:

'Sahasrayugaparyantamaharyad-brahmaṇo viduḥ rātrim yugasahasrāntām te'horātravido janāḥ'—In this mortal world the combination of the four ages–Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali is called a four-fold age. A day of Brahmā lasts such a thousand four-fold ages and so does his night.* With this standard of time Brahmā's age is of a hundred years. Then Brahmā after his span of time, merges into God, his world merges into Nature and Nature merges into God. All those, who are born, are subject to death. The greatest pleasures which are born of sense-contacts, are verily sources of pain (Gītā 5/22) and have a beginning and an end, while only God is beyond time. Thus knowing this fact the great souls don't attach the least importance to the heavenly pleasures of even the world of Brahmā.

Link:–In the next verse there is the description of Brahmā's day and night and creation and dissolution of the universe.

अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे ।
रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके ॥ १८ ॥

avyaktādvyaktayaḥ sarvāḥ prabhavantyaharāgame
rātryāgame pralīyante tatraivāvyaktasaṁjñake

All manifest beings emanate from the Unmanifest (Brahmā's subtle body) at the commencement of Brahmā's day; and at the commencement of his night they merge in the same unmanifest. 18

Comment:

'Avyaktādvyaktayaḥ sarvāḥ prabhavantyaharāgame rātryāgame pralīyante tatraivāvyaktasaṁjñake'—The bodies of beings here have been called 'manifest' and in the fourth verse of the fourteenth chapter they have been called 'forms'. As an embodied one has his self-made creation of 'I' and 'mine' when he wakes up from sleep and that creation merges in him when he is asleep. Similarly, the multitude of beings are dragged into the manifest state from Brahmā's subtle body viz., Prakṛti when Brahmā wakes up and they merge in his subtle body when he retires to sleep. It means that when Brahmā wakes up, there is creation and when he retires to sleep, there is dissolution. But when his life-span of a hundred years is over, there is final annihilation in which Brahmā merges into the the Lord. The span of final annihilation is equal to the age of Brahmā. At the end of the span of final annihilation, Brahmā emanates from the Lord and then there is the new creation of the universe (Gītā 9/7-8).

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।
रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥ १९ ॥

* A day of the gods lasts men's six months and so does a night. Thus a year of the gods lasts three hundred and sixty years of men. Similarly the duration of the four ages—Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali is equal to a divine age of the gods. It means that a divine age of the gods is equal to — Satya age of seventeen lac and twenty-eight thousand years, Tretā age of twelve lac and ninety-six thousand years, Dvapara age of eight lac and sixty-four thousand years and Kali age of four lac and thirty-two thousand years — total forty-three lac and twenty thousand years. It is also called 'Mahāyuga' or 'Caturyugī. Brahmā's one day lasts a thousand divine ages of the gods (men's four thousand, three hundred and twenty million years) and so does his night. This day of Brahmā is called 'Kalpa' or 'Sarga' (Creation) and the night is called 'Pralaya' (Dissolution).

bhūtagrāmaḥ sa evāyaṁ bhūtvā bhūtvā pralīyate
rātryāgame'vaśaḥ pārtha prabhavatyaharāgame

This multitude of beings, being born again and again, under compulsion from Prakṛti, merges at the commencement of Brahmā's night and rises again at the commencement of his day. 19

Comment:

'Bhūtagrāmaḥ sa evāyam'—This multitude of beings, which is subject to birth and death, from time immemorial being a portion of the Lord is eternal and imperishable. It remains the same at the time of creation and dissolution and also new creation and final dissolution. But by an error beings assume their affinity with Nature and its evolutes – body and worldly objects etc., which are kaleidoscopic and perishable. They don't want to leave the bodies but bodies are left. Thus this man (soul) has to be born and then decay again and again. This wheel of birth will continue so long as he continues his affinity with the body and the world which he assumed himself. He is free and capable in snapping this tie. Actually he can't keep this association permanently because objects are ephemeral and perishable.

The Lord created the multitude of beings for His recreation, with a lot of material for the sport. This is a rule of the game (sport) that game-materials are only for the game's sake, not for laying personal claim on them. The beings instead of taking part in the sport attached themselves to the material, accepting it as their own and thus got entagled in it. So they have a disinclination for God.

'Bhūtvā bhūtvā pralīyate'—The bodies are born and they die again. There is a constant change in them. But the changeless soul by having its affinity with the bodies accepts their change, their birth and death as its own. To be born and to die is 'Para-dharma' and to realize God is 'Svadharma.'

'Rātryāgame'vaśaḥ pārtha prabhavatyaharāgame'—The man by thinking the things as his own, thinks that he is their master but actually he becomes a slave to them. The more things he possesses, the more dependent he becomes. He can never be liberated from this dependence, unless he attains God. So long as he continues his affinity with Nature, he will have to follow the wheel of birth and death. By performing actions and reaping their fruits even at the time when Brahmā wakes up (creation) and when he retires to sleep (dissolution) (8/18), at the time when Brahmā manifests himself (new-creation) and when he merges in the Lord (final-dissolution) (9/7-8) and when he is made to act helplessly by the modes of Nature (3/5). It means that he can't be free from the painful cycle of birth and death unless he realizes the self or God and unless he renounces his affinity with Nature. But when he is not swayed by Nature and objects born of Nature viz., he realizes the pure self by totally renouncing affinity with Nature, he is not reborn even at the time of new creation and is not tormented at the time of final dissolution (Gītā 14/2).

He is subject to birth and death because he attaches importance to material objects. This helplessness of his birth and death is known as helplessness because of time or nature or action or modes. This helplessness continues so long as he derives pleasures which are born of sense contacts. He does not want to renounce this desire and so he remains helpless. He thinks that he is unable to be liberated from it. But actually this desire is self-made and so it is his responsibility to renounce it. He can renounce it if and when he has a firm determination.

Link:–After describing the perishable world, now the Lord in the next verse describes the unmanifested Eternal Existence.

परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः ।
यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥ २० ॥

parastasmāttu bhāvo'nyo'vyakto'vyaktātsanātanaḥ
yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu naśyatsu na vinaśyati

Beyond this unmanifest (Brahmā's subtle body) there is yet another unmanifested Eternal Existence which does not perish even though all beings perish. 20

Comment:

'Parastasmāttu bhāvo'nyo' vyakto' vyaktātsanātanaḥ'—From the sixteenth to the nineteenth verse it has been said that all the worlds from the abode of Brahmā downwards are subject to rebirth. But the Eternal Existence is different from them—so the term 'Tu' (but) is used.

The word 'Avyaktāt' stands for the subtle body of Brahmā because in the eighteenth and nineteenth verses it has been mentioned that all manifest beings emanate from Brahmā's subtle body and again they merge in the same. The term 'Tasmāt' also stands for Brahmā's subtle body. The unmanifest Eternal Existence is beyond Brahmā's subtle body as well as his causal body (Primordial Matter).

Beyond Brahmā's subtle body there are two existences — Primordial Matter and God. This context pertains to God. So unmanifested Eternal Existence has been used for God Who does not perish even when all beings perish.

In the Gītā all beings have been called unmanifest (2/28); Brahmā's subtle body has also been called unmanifest (8/18); Matter or Nature has also been called unmanifest (13/5). Beyond all of them, the form of the Lord whether manifest or unmanifest is ever-existent. He was neither a naught nor will be a naught. He can never be a naught as He is eternal. He is Supreme. None can ever be superior to Him.

'Yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu naśyatsu na vinaśyati'—The unmanifested Existence never perishes even though all beings perish. In that Absolute Existence there is not the least modification while in the entire universe there are so many modifications.

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains that the perishable beings after attaining the Imperishable don't return.

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।
यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ २१ ॥

avyakto'kṣara ityuktastamāhuḥ paramāṁ gatim
yaṁ prāpya na nivartante taddhāma paramaṁ mama

This Unmanifest, spoken of as the Imperishable, is said to be the Supreme Goal; that is My Supreme Abode attaining which there is no return. 21

Comment:

'Avyakto'kṣara ityuktastamāhuḥ paramāṁ gatim yaṁ prāpya na nivartante taddhāma paramaṁ mama'—The Lord Who has been called 'Mām' (Me) in the twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth and thirtieth verses of the seventh chapter, 'Imperishable Brahma' in the third verse of the eighth chapter, 'Adhiyajña' (God) in the fourth verse, 'Mām' (Me) in the fifth and seventh verses, 'Supreme Divine Puruṣa' (God) in the eighth verse. 'The

Omniscient, the Ancient, the Ruler' etc., in the ninth verse, 'Mām' (Me) in the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth verses, 'Unmanifest' and 'Eternal' in the twentieth verse, here has been called 'Unmanifest' 'Imperishable' 'The Supreme Goal' and 'The Supreme Abode', attaining Which beings do not return. Similarly in the twenty-seventh verse of the fourteenth chapter He has declared, "I am the Abode of Brahma, the Immortal and the Immutable, the eternal Dharma (Virtue) and Absolute Bliss". Thus the Lord has explained that He, Who has been described in different verses by different names, is One and the same.

Some of the people think that the fruit of the adoration of the Lord Who is endowed with attributes, and He Who is attributeless, is different. To remove this misconception Lord Kṛṣṇa in this verse has made it clear that the Lord is one and the same and devotees according to their tastes and beliefs worshipping Him in different ways and His different forms, attain the same Lord.

The other worlds including that of Brahmā are subject to return i.e., beings after going there have to return and thus they have to follow the wheel of birth and death because all of them are within the domain of Nature (Matter) and are perishable, while the Abode of the Lord is beyond Nature and is Imperishable. The beings after going there, have no return, no birth. But, just like the Lord Who incarnates by His own will to enable the people to attain salvation, the liberated souls by the Lord's will can come to this earth as representatives of the Lord in order to enable the people of this mortal world to attain salvation.

Link:–In the next verse He explains that the Imperishable can be attained by exclusive devotion.

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया ।
यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ॥ २२ ॥

puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyastvananyayā
yasyāntaḥsthāni bhūtāni yena sarvamidaṁ tatam

That Supreme Puruṣa, O Pārtha, in Whom all beings reside and by Whom all this is pervaded, is attainable only by exclusive devotion. 22

Comment:

'Yasyāntaḥsthāni bhūtāni yena sarvamidaṁ tatam'—Lord Kṛṣṇa in the twelfth verse of the seventh chapter said in the negative, "Whatever entities there are born of Sattva (quality of goodness), of Rajas (principle of activity) (mode of passion), of Tamas (principle of inertia), (mode of ignorance) know them all as evolved from Me alone. In reality, however, neither I exist in them, nor do they exist in Me." Here He says in the affirmative, "All beings reside in Me and I pervade the whole world." This fact has been explained both in the affirmative and in the negative in the fourth, fifth and sixth verses of the ninth chapter. It means that beings have no existence apart from the Lord. They emanate from Him, reside in Him and merge into Him.

The Supreme Lord pervades everywhere, every time, all things, actions and beings etc. Though ornaments made of gold have nothing besides gold, yet people don't pay attention to gold because they attach importance to the shapes, names, weights and prices etc., of different ornaments. Similarly we being entangled in favourable and unfavourable circumstances of the perishable world, don't pay attention to the Lord Who existed before the creation, exists now and will exist after the dissolution of the creation.

'Puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā

labhyastvananyayā'—In the previous verse the Lord Who has been called the Unmanifest, the Imperishable, the Supreme Goal etc., here has been called that Supreme Puruṣa Who can be attained by exclusive devotion only.

The devotees, who attach importance to the evolutes of Nature which are called others, by accepting their independent existence, have no exclusive devotion to the Lord so they can't attain the Lord quickly. If they accept every being, thing and action as His manifestation and then perform actions in order to please Him only, their devotion is exclusive and so they attain the Supreme Lord. As water exists as snow, hail, cloud, fog, dew, vapour, river, pond and sea etc., the gross, subtle and causal universe which seems, is nothing besides the Lord. Therefore all his actions such as eating, drinking, sitting, going, speaking, sleeping etc., are nothing but adoration to the Lord (Gītā 18/46).

An Exceptional Fact

Arjuna's question "How are you to be known at the time of death?"(8/2) seems to be full of emotion because in spite of beholding the Lord before him, he became curious to know His singularity. In response to his question the Lord explaining the general rule of thinking of Him at the time of death, ordered him to think of Him at all times. Then from the eighth verse to the sixteenth verse He explained how to attain the Lord 'Endowed with attributes and formless,' 'Attributeless and formless,' and 'Endowed with attributes and form' each in three verses. Out of the three He explained that attaining the Lord 'Endowed with attributes and formless' and 'Attributeless and formless' is difficult because all the media of perception have to be restrained, while He endowed with attributes and form can be attained easily depending on Him and constantly by thinking of Him.

After the sixteenth verse Lord Kṛṣṇa in the next six verses explained the special importance of the Lord Who is endowed with attributes and form. In the first three verses He explained the duration of Brahmā and his world while in the next three verses He explained the superiority of His Own and His Abode. It means that He is singular than the subtle body of Brahmā. All forms of worship are within His form. He can be realized through supreme devotion. On His realization strivers are not inclined to other gods nor there is any need for them. Then He explained that He can be attained by exclusive devotion.

Thus His abode is superior to Brahmā's, and His form is superior to that of Brahmā. It means that He is the ultimate goal of all beings and they are all within Him.

Link:–In the sixteenth verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explained that all the worlds from the abode of Brahmā downwards are subject to return but on attaining Him there is no rebirth. But He has not explained the time (path) departing when they don't return and also the time (path) departing when they return. So He starts the topic.

यत्र काले त्वनावृत्तिमावृत्तिं चैव योगिनः ।
प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ॥ २३ ॥

yatra kāle tvanāvṛttimāvṛttiṁ caiva yoginaḥ
prayātā yānti taṁ kālaṁ vakṣyāmi bharatarṣabha

Now I shall tell you, O best of the Bharatas, the time when the Yogīs depart never to return and also the time when they depart to return. 23

Comment:

[Liberation from bondage in the mortal world is called 'Sadyo Mukti' (Quick Salvation) i.e., those who attain God by exclusive devotion attain the highest perfection. Those who have subtle desire at the time of death go to the abode of Brahmā, and then are liberated with him. This sort of salvation is called 'Krama Mukti' (Chain Salvation). Those who go to the abode of Brahmā to enjoy pleasures are subject to return. 'Sadyo Mukti' (Salvation in this mortal world) has been described in the fifteenth verse. Lord Kṛṣṇa starts the topic to explain the other two .]

'Yatra kāle tvanāvṛttimāvṛttiṁ caiva yoginaḥ prayātā yāntī taṁ kalaṁ vakṣyāmi bharatarṣabha'—The term 'Tu' (Verily) has been used to point out the topic which was left. The word 'Kāla' stands for the path which has been named as 'Gati' and 'Sṛti' in verses twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh respectively in this chapter.

'Anāvṛttimāvṛttim'—The devotees, who possess discrimination i.e., who have a disinclination for the worldly things and pleasures and an inclination for God, depart never to return. Because of disinterestedness in their path there is pre-dominance of light (discrimination). But those who have a disinclination for God and are entangled in attachment and pleasures, depart to return because their discrimination is veiled. Their path is dark viz., there is pre-dominance of ignorance. The term 'Caiva' (and even) is used for those whose aim has been to realize God but at the time of death they have a little (subtle) desire and so they after enjoying the heavenly pleasures, come back. Here the word 'Yoginaḥ' has been used both for those who don't desire the fruit of their actions and also for those who have a desire for the fruit of their actions.

Link:–Now in the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa describes the path of the Yogīs (Ascetics) who depart never to return.

अग्निर्ज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम्।
तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ॥ २४ ॥

agnirjyotirahaḥ śuklaḥ ṣaṇmāsā uttarāyaṇam
tatra prayātā gacchanti brahma brahmavido janāḥ

In the path in which are stationed deities presiding over effulgent fire, day light, the bright fortnight and the six months of the northward course of the sun, then going forth after death, the knowers of Brahma (having attained Brahma-loka along with Brahmā) finally reach Brahma. 24

Comment:

'Agnirjyotirahaḥ śuklaḥ ṣaṇmāsā uttarāyaṇam'—In the bright path first of all there is the right of fire-god. Fire gives light at night and that light works for a short distance and for a short time while the day light works for a longer distance and a longer time. Bright fortnight is the night of manes. The light of this bright fortnight remains for a very long distance and for many days in the sky. The northern path of the sun is of six months and is equal to a day of the gods. The light in the northern path remains for a very long distance and time.

'Tatra prayātā gacchanti brahma brahmavido janāḥ'—Those who pass along the bright path, first go to the territory of fire-god. Then the fire-god hands them over to the god of day after they have crossed fire-god's territory. Similarly the god of day hands them over to the god of bright fortnight and he hands them over to the god of the northward course of the sun and he hands them over to the god of the abode of Brahmā. Then

with Brahmā they are liberated and attain God.

Here the term 'Brahma-vidaḥ' has been used for those who know Brahma, not for those who have realized Him. If they had realized Him, they would have been liberated souls here, they would have not gone to the abode of Brahmā.

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa describes the path of those who depart to return.

धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम्।
तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते॥ २५॥

dhūmo rātristathā kṛṣṇaḥ ṣaṇmāsā dakṣiṇāyanam
tatra cāndramasaṁ jyotiryogī prāpya nivartate

In the path in which are stationed the gods presiding over smoke, night, the dark fortnight and the six months of the southern passage of the sun, then going forth, the Yogī (devoted to action with a motive) after death obtains the lunar light and returns to the mortal world. 25

Comment:

'Dhūmo rātristathā kṛṣṇaḥ ṣaṇmāsā dakṣināyanaṁ tatra cāndramasaṁ jyotiryogī prāpya nivartate'—In the dark path, the god of smoke hands over those, who pass along that path to the god of night when they have crossed his territory. Similarly the god of night hands them over to the god of dark fortnight, who hands them over to the god of the southern passage of the sun. He hands them over to the god of lunar light i.e., they attain the divine worlds such as heaven etc. Then after enjoying the pleasures as the fruit of their merits and virtues, they have to return.

Here a point needs attention that the lunar sphere which is seen is not the lunar world mentioned here, because the lunar sphere is near the earth while the lunar world is farther than even the sun. The nectar (energy) to the lunar sphere comes from the lunar world and that energy nourishes all herbs and plants.

Here the dark path stands for the path which leads to the higher worlds. It has been called dark because it is darker than the bright path. Ordinary men are born in the mortal world after death, sinners go to the demoniac wombs while vile sinners to hells. Thus those who pass along the dark path are far superior to those who take demoniac births or go to hells because this path is better and brighter than other paths which lead to the cycle of birth and death.

While returning from the dark path the soul first comes to the sky, then to the clouds through air; through rain it enters the grain. Then it enters the men when they eat food according to the fruit of its actions of the previous birth. From the man it goes to the woman and takes birth. Thus it follows the wheel of birth and death.

Now a question rises why the Lord has called the people who perform actions for their fruit, Yogīs (Ascetics). There can be several reasons—

(i) The Lord in the Gītā declares that those who are established in Sattva (the quality of goodness) go to higher regions while others go to middle or lower regions (Gītā 14/18). Here there is the description of those who go to the higher regions. Thus being superior to those who go to the middle or lower regions, they have been called Yogīs.

(ii) They go to the higher worlds for enjoying heavenly pleasures after having renounced the mundane pleasures by self-control. They have been called Yogīs because they become equanimous whether they receive mundane pleasures or not.

(iii) Their aim has been to realize God. But at the time of death they deviate from

Yoga because of their subtle desire for pleasures, so they go to the higher worlds such as the abode of Brahmā etc. After living there for a long time they are born in the house of pious and wealthy men. Thus the devotees, who deviate from Yoga, also go along the same dark path. So persons having an interested motive have been called Yogīs.

In the twenty-fourth verse Lord Kṛṣṇa has used the expression 'Brahmavido janāḥ' (Brahma knowing people) in plural number while in this verse He has used the term 'Yogī' in singular number. It shows that all men deserve God-Realization and it is easy to attain Him because He is naturally attained to all. So the Lord has used plural number. But it is difficult to attain heaven etc., because so many efforts are to be made and so many rituals have to be observed by a person. Moreover from heaven he has to return to this mortal world. So here singular number has been used.

An Exceptional Fact

(1)

Those whose aim is to realize God but their desire for pleasures is not rootedout, go to the abode of Brahmā. Thereafter enjoying the pleasures, their desire is wiped out and they are liberated from the bondage of birth and death as described in the twenty-fourth verse.

Those whose aim is to realize God and have no desire for pleasures here or hereafter but at the time of death deviate from meditation on the attributeless Lord, are directly born in the family of enlightened Yogīs. There by striving with greater vigour than before for perfection, they attain salvation. (Gītā 6/42-43).

Those whose aim is to enjoy the heavenly pleasures, ascend heaven by virtue of their meritorious deeds and return to the earth when their fruit has been enjoyed (Gītā 7/20-23; 8/25; 9/20-21).

Those whose aim is to realize God deviate from Yoga because they could not root out the desire for worldly pleasures at the time of death. So they obtain the higher worlds such as heaven etc., enjoy pleasures there and then take birth in the house of pious and wealthy men. There by their former practice they are drawn towards God and reach the Supreme Goal (Gītā 6/41, 44-45). Such type of strivers are far superior to those whose aim is to enjoy the heavenly pleasures.

(2)

Generally people think that those who die in day time, in bright fortnight and in the six months of the northward course of the sun, attain salvation but those who die in night time, in dark fortnight and in the six months of the southern passage of the sun, don't attain salvation. But actually it is not so. This description has been given only for those who go to the higher regions. It does not apply to those who go to hells or take births in evil species. The fact is that beings go to higher or lower regions according to their actions whether they die in the day time or night time, bright fortnight or dark fortnight or northward course of the sun or the southward course of the sun.

The devotees who take refuge in the Lord, attain Him whether they die in the day time or night time, bright fortnight or dark fortnight, or northward course of the sun or the southward course of the sun.

Now a doubt rises why Bhīṣma, a liberated soul waited for the northward course of the sun in leaving the mortal body. The clarification is that Bhīṣma had not to go to the Abode of God. He being a god named Vasu had to go to the world of the gods. There the doors remain closed at the time of the southward course of the sun. So if he went at that time, he would wait outside to enter his world. He had the power to die any time as he willed. So he thought it better to die and wait here as he could behold Lord Kṛṣṇa and have good company which would be useful for the welfare of everyone. So he left the body at the time of the northward course of the sun.

Link:–The next verse is the concluding verse of the topic of the two paths.

शुक्लकृष्णे गती ह्येते जगतः शाश्वते मते ।
एकया यात्यनावृत्तिमन्ययावर्तते पुनः ॥ २६ ॥

śuklakṛṣṇe gatī hyete jagataḥ śāśvate mate
ekayā yātyanāvṛttimanyayāvartate punaḥ

These two paths, the bright and the dark, are considered to be the world's eternal paths. Proceeding by one, a man has not to return, while proceeding by the other, he returns. 26

Comment:

'Śuklakṛṣṇe gatī hyete jagataḥ śāśvate mate'—All creatures according to their actions or by God's grace sometime or other receive this human life and then according to the actions of this human life, they go to the higher, middle or lower regions. Now it depends upon them whether they pass along the bright path or the dark path, because they are all connected with the two paths.

So long as men attach importance to the perishable objects of the world and have a desire for them, they can go to the lower regions even after reaching the higher ones. Similarly being portions of the Lord, they can go to the higher regions. So a striver should ever be alert and cautious. He should never attach importance to the perishable things of the world and should never hate a person because that person being a portion of the Lord may be inclined to Him any time.

As the Lord has declared the Yoga imperishable, the two paths, bright and dark are also imperishable and eternal.

'Ekayā yātyanāvṛttimanyayāvartate punaḥ'—The strivers proceeding by the bright path have not to return; they go to the abode of Brahmā and attain emancipation with Brahmā. But the persons proceeding by the dark path return i.e., follow the wheel of birth and death.

Link:–Now Lord Kṛṣṇa in the next verse tells the merits of knowing the two paths.

नैते सृती पार्थ जानन्योगी मुह्यति कश्चन ।
तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन ॥ २७ ॥

naite sṛtī pārtha jānanyogī muhyati kaścana
tasmātsarveṣu kāleṣu yogayukto bhavārjuna

Knowing these two paths, O Pārtha, no Yogī is deluded. Therefore, O Arjuna, be established in Yoga, at all times. 27

Comment:

'Naite sṛtī pārtha jānanyogī muhyati kaścana'—The strivers, who don't attach importance to the perishable objects, are the followers of bright path. But those persons, who are engrossed in the world and whose aim is to hanker after prosperity and pleasures, are the followers of the dark path. The people who by controlling their senses from the worldly pleasures, perform actions such as oblation, penance and charity etc., in order to enjoy the heavenly pleasures, are also in the dark because they have to return from the higher regions and have to follow the wheel of birth and death.

Thus a striver by knowing the secret of the two paths becomes a Yogī i.e., he performs actions without having any desire for the fruit of actions because he transcends the pleasures of this world as well as of the next one. Thus he is not deluded.

A Yogī is he whose aim is to remain equanimous in acquisition and non-acquisition of worldly pleasures.

'Tasmātsarveṣu kāleṣu yogayukto bhavārjuna'—One who is determined that he has to realize God, remains equanimous in favourable and unfavourable circumstances and incidents etc. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa orders Arjuna to be established in Yoga in the form of equanimity i.e., he without being affected by the favourable and the unfavourable circumstances, should make their right use. In favourable circumstances he should serve the world and in unfavourable circumstances he should renounce the desire for favourable circumstances.

Link:–Now Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the merit of becoming a Yogī.

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपःसु चैव
दानेषु यत्पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम्।
अत्येति तत्सर्वमिदं विदित्वा
योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम्॥ २८॥

vedeṣu yajñeṣu tapaḥsu caiva
dāneṣu yatpuṇyaphalaṁ pradiṣṭam
atyeti tatsarvamidaṁ viditvā
yogī paraṁ sthānamupaiti cādyam

The Yogī, who knows this secret, transcends the fruits of meritorious deeds attached to the study of the Vedas, performance of sacrifices, austerities and charities, and attains the supreme primeval Abode. 28

Comment:

'Vedeṣu yajñeṣu tapaḥsu caiva dāneṣu yatpuṇyaphalaṁ pradiṣṭaṁ atyeti tatsarvamidaṁ viditvā yogī paraṁ sthānamupaiti cādyam'—The fruit of performing the meritorious acts such as austerities, sacrifices, penances, charities and pilgrimages etc., is perishable because all those acts have a beginning and an end; so how can their fruit be imperishable? The man (soul) because of his ignorance gets entangled in the perishable things and persons etc., though he is an eternal portion of the Lord. Thus the striver, who knows the secret of the bright and the dark paths, described from the twenty-third verse to the twenty-sixth verse, transcends the fruits of the meritorious deeds of the performance of sacrifices, austerities and charities etc., because he comes to know that all the worlds of pleasures from the abode of Brahmā downwards are subject to return, but on attaining the Lord there is no rebirth (Gītā 8/16). He also knows that he is a fragment of the Lord and so without getting entangled in the perishable and kaleidoscopic things and pleasures, he can take refuge in Him. Thus he can attain the primeval Abode viz., God* Who has been called in the twenty-first verse of this chapter 'Supreme Goal' and 'Supreme Abode'.

The man who is engrossed in pleasures and prosperity can't know the Supreme primeval Abode viz., God. He himself is responsible for this ignorance because of his disinclination for God. He is able to wipe out this ignorance and error. If he renounces the desire for the sensual pleasure he can know the supreme primeval Abode viz., The Lord. So a striver should make the best possible efforts to attain the goal of human life, by renouncing the desire for perishable pleasures.

At the end of the sixth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa

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* "I am the prime cause in all respects of gods as well as of other seers" (Gītā 10/2); "I take refuge in that Primal Person." (Gītā 15/4)

first told the merit of a Yogī and then ordered Arjuna to be a Yogī (6/46), but here He first ordered him to be a Yogī and then explained the merit of a Yogī. The reason is that in the sixth chapter there is the context of the aspirant who falls short of perfection in Yoga. Arjuna there puts the question, "He whose mind deviates from Yoga, does he not perish?" In response to his question Lord Kṛṣṇa answers, "There is no fall for him either here or hereafter. Not only this but even the seeker of the Yoga transcends the fruit of actions." Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa, there first tells the merit of Yogī and then orders Arjuna to be a Yogī. But here Arjuna puts the question, "How are You to be known at the time of death by the self-controlled?" So Lord Kṛṣṇa answers, "I am attainable by exclusive devotion." It means that when a devotee, having total disinclination for the worldly objects, takes refuge only in Him, He is attained by that Yogī easily. So Lord Kṛṣṇa first orders him to be a Yogī and then explains the merit of a Yogī.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे अक्षरब्रह्मयोगो नामाष्टमोऽध्यायः ॥८॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde akṣarabrahmayogo nāmāṣṭmo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ, Tat, Sat, the names of the Lord, in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavadgītā, the knowledge of Brahma, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, this is eighth discourse designated:

"The Yoga of the Imperishable Brahma."

The terms 'Akṣara' (Imperishable) and 'Brahma' stand for God Who is attributeless-formless; with attributes-formless; and endowed with attributes and form. The thought of anyone of the three kinds leads a striver to union with God. Therefore this chapter is designated "The Yoga of the Imperishable Brahma."

Words, letters and Uvāca (said) in the Eighth Chapter

1. In this chapter in **'Athāṣṭamo'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are three words, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are four words, in verses there are three hundred and seventy-seven words and there are thirteen words of colophon. Thus the total number of words is three hundred and ninety-seven.

2. In **'Athāṣṭamo'dhyāyaḥ'** there are six letters, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are thirteen letters, in verses there are nine hundred and forty-five letters and there are forty-seven letters of colophon. Thus the total number of the letters is one thousand and eleven. Out of the twenty-eight verses of this chapter each of the ninth, eleventh and twenty-eighth verses is of forty-four letters, the tenth verse is of forty-five letters and each of the remaining twenty-four verses of thirty-two letters.

3. In this chapter **'Uvāca'** (said) has been used two times—**'Arjuna Uvāca'** once and **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** once.

Metres Used in the Eighth Chapter

Out of the twenty-eight verses of this chapter in the ninth, tenth and eleventh verses there is **'upajāti'** metre; in the twenty-eighth verse there is **'indravajrā'** metre. Out of the remaining twenty-four verses in the third quarter of the second verse and first quarter of the fourteenth verse 'bha-gaṇa' being used there is **'bha-vipulā'** metre; in the third quarter of the twenty-fourth verse 'ma-gaṇa' being used there is **'ma-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the twenty-seventh verse 'ra-gaṇa' being used there is **'ra-vipulā'** metre; and in the first quarter and the third quarter of the third verse 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'jātipakṣa-vipulā'** metre. The remaining nineteen verses are possessed of the characteristics of right **'pathyāvaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

Śrī Hariḥ

NINTH CHAPTER

Introduction

In the seventh chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa was unfolding to Arjuna Knowledge (Wisdom) with Realization (real knowledge of manifest Divinity). But in between Arjuna at the beginning of the eighth chapter put seven questions. So Lord Kṛṣṇa by answering the first six questions in brief answered in detail the seventh question—"How are you to be known at the time of death by the self-controlled?"

Now the Lord starts the same topic of Knowledge (Jñāna) with Realization (Vijñāna) in the ninth chapter.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे ।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥ १ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

idaṁ tu te guhyatamaṁ pravakṣyāmyanasūyave
jñānaṁ vijñānasahitaṁ yajjñātvā mokṣyase'śubhāt

The Blessed Lord said:

To you who do not cavil, I shall now unfold the most profound Knowledge (Jñāna), alongwith Realization (Vijñāna), knowing which you will be released from evil i.e., evil of worldly birth and death. 1

Comment:

'Idaṁ tu te guhyatamaṁ pravakṣyāmyanasūyave'—Lord Kṛṣṇa has used the term 'Idaṁ' (this) to point out the topic which he wants to unfold. To tell its merit He has used the superlative form of the adjective–'Guhyatamam' (most profound). It means that this knowledge combined with realization is the most profound. It has been called 'sovereign secret' in the second verse and 'the most secret' in the sixty-fourth verse of the eighteenth chapter.

Here in this chapter first He used the expression 'Guhyatamam' (the most profound) and later (in 9/34) used 'Manmanā-bhava' (Fix your mind on Me), while in the eighteenth chapter first He used the expression 'Sarvaguhyatamam' (the most secret of all) and then (in 18/65) said 'Manmanā bhava' (Fix your mind on Me). It means that the same topic has been explained here as well as there.

This most profound secret can't be disclosed to all because the Lord has described His own merit in it. One who possesses the carping spirit in the least can take the contrary meaning that Lord Kṛṣṇa is boasting of His own merits. So the Lord wants to say to Arjuna that he is devoid of the carping spirit. So He will unfold the most profound knowledge along with realization to him viz., He will tell the 'Tattva' and also the methods for its realization.

Secondly He means to say that every human being is eligible to take refuge in Him. Even the vilest sinner belonging to any caste, creed, country and colour deserves to seek refuge in Him. So by taking refuge in Him he can attain Him. So He wants to disclose this secret.

The Lord uses the term 'Tu' (Indeed) because He could not say in the seventh chapter all that He wanted to say. So He declares that He will unfold the same topic again.

'Jñānaṁ vijñānasahitam'—The belief that the Lord is the root of the universe is 'Jñāna' (Knowledge) and the realization that in the universe there is nothing besides the

Lord is 'Vijñāna' (Real Knowledge of Manifest Divinity). In the first half of the preceding verse the Lord has eulogized 'Knowledge along with Realization' by the terms 'Idam' and 'Guhyatamam'.

Knowledge and Realization

"By knowing this knowledge combined with realization you will be freed from evil. This knowledge is the sovereign science, the sovereign secret etc. Men deviod of faith in this Dharma (Duty) revolve in the path of the mortal world" (9/1-3). By saying so the Lord explained 'Knowledge'. "All this universe is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest form i.e., in this universe there is nothing else besides Me"(9/4-6). By saying so He explained 'Vijñāna'.

"All beings go into My Prakṛti (the Prime cause) at dissolution and at the beginning of creation I bring them forth again. But these actions don't bind Me. With Me as the supervisor, Nature brings forth the whole creation. Fools, not knowing My supreme nature, think low of Me. The senseless persons with vain hopes, vain actions and vain knowledge have embraced a nature which is fiendish, demoniacal and delusive. The great souls, possessing a divine nature, knowing Me as imperishable and the prime cause of creation, worship Me constantly with undivided mind. Others, through their offerings of knowledge, worship Me as their very self etc." (9/7-15). By saying so the Lord explained 'Knowledge'. "I am the Vedic ritual, I am the sacrifice, I am the offering to the departed (ancestors), I am the medicinal herb etc., and I am being as well as non-being, i.e., I am everything" (9/16-19). By saying so He explained 'Vijñāna.' "Those who worship Me through sacrifice to seek access to heaven, having enjoyed the vast world of heaven return to the world of mortals on the exhaustion of their merits. To those who worship Me with exclusive devotion, I attend to their needs and preserve what is already possessed by them. These devotees who endowed with faith, worship other gods, worship Me alone, though not in accordance with rules. Those who don't know Me as the Enjoyer and the Lord of all sacrifices, fall. Those who offer Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or even water etc., and all the actions, are freed from the bondage of actions" (9/20-28). By saying so He explained 'Knowledge.' "I am equally present in all beings; there is none hateful or dear to Me. But those who worship Me with devotion, are in Me and I am in them" (9/29). By saying so He explained 'Vijñāna'. In the next five verses (from 9/30-34) 'Vijñāna' has been explained.*

'Yajjñātvā mokṣyaseśubhāt'— Affinity with the unreal is an evil which is the cause of birth in good and evil wombs. This affinity is not real, it is merely assumed, by error. So a man can be liberated from this assumed affinity, by not assuming it. Actually the man (soul) is an eternal fragment of the Lord but it assumes its affinity of 'I'ness and 'Mineness' with the body and the world and thus dies and is reborn. When he realizes the reality or he is inclined towards God then he is released from the evil of worldly birth and death.

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa mentions the merits of Knowledge with Realization.

राजविद्या राजगुह्यं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम् ।
प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम् ॥ २ ॥

rājavidyā rājaguhyaṁ pavitramidamuttamam
pratyakṣāvagamaṁ dharmyaṁ susukhaṁ kartumavyayam

* It does not mean that 'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna' are water tight compartments and they don't include each other.

This knowledge with realization is the sovereign science, the sovereign secret, supremely holy, the most excellent, directly realizable, attended with virtue, very easy to practise and imperishable. 2

Comment:

'Rājavidyā'—This knowledge with Realiization is the sovereign science after knowing which, nothing remains to be known.

At the beginning of the seventh chapter Lord Krsna said, "After knowing My entire form nothing else remains to be known." He declared at the end of the fifteenth chapter, "The undeluded person who knows Me beyond perishable Matter and superior to the imperishable soul, knows all i.e., nothing else remains to be known to him."

So it seems that greater importance has been attached to the Lord Who is endowed with attributes and form.

'Rājaguhyam'—This is the sovereign secret because in the world there is nothing more secret than this.

As an actor in a play conceals his identity, similarly the Lord is not manifest to all (Gītā 7/25), because the men devoid of devotion have a carping spirit. But He is manifest to His loving devotees. This is something very secret.

'Pavitramidam'—This science is supremely holy and purifier. By this science, even the vilest sinner becomes virtuous viz., holy and secures lasting peace (9/31).

In the tenth chapter Arjuna addressed Lord Krsna as the greatest purifier (10/12); in the fourth chapter Lord Krsna declared that in the world there is no purifier like knowledge (4/38) and here He declares Knowledge with Realization, by using eight adjectives, as a purifier. It means that the Lord and His name, form, sport, place, thought, utterance, loud-chanting, meditation and knowledge etc., are holy and purifier i.e., everything of the Lord is a great purifier which purifies all beings.

'Uttamam'—This science is the most excellent because it makes My devotee the noblest. He becomes so noble that I obey him. About those devotees the Lord declares, "They abide in Me and I abide in them" (9/29) i.e., by being absorbed in Me, they become one with Me.

'Pratyakṣāvagamam'—It is directly realizable. The more one knows it, the more uncommon he becomes. As soon as he knows it, he secures lasting peace. Thus it is directly realizable.

'Dharmyam'—It is virtuous. All the actions performed for God-Realization without the desire for fruit are included in virtuous actions.

In the second chapter Lord Krsna said to Arjuna," There is nothing more welcome for a man of the warrior class than a righteous war" (2/31). It means that all the actions performed according to one's caste and stage (order) of life, sanctioned by the scriptures are virtuous. .Besides them, all the means for God-Realization and all the divine traits have also been called immortal Dharma (Righteousness) (Gītā 12/20).

'Avyayam'—It is imperishable. The Lord has also said that His devotee never perishes (9/31).

'Kartum susukham'—It is very easy to practise. How easy it is to offer a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water etc., to God by regarding them as His (9/26)! If a devotee offers the things to God, thinking them as his own, the Lord reciprocates them infinite times more. But if he offers them to Him regarding them as His, He offers Himself to him. How easy it is ! He has only to rectify his error.

The Lord is easily attainable because He pervades everywhere, every time, all the persons and things etc. Whatever is seen, heard and grasped therein He pervades. All the men are His and He is theirs. But they, without realizing this real affinity attach importance to Matter and thus follow the cycle of birth and death. If they pay a little attention to Him, they will perceive singularity in Him and will realize that they have no affinity with Nature but they have very close relationship with God.

Link:–When it is very easy to practise and is also sovereign, why do people not avail themselves of it? The answer comes:

अश्रद्दधानाः पुरुषा धर्मस्यास्य परंतप ।
अप्राप्य मां निवर्तन्ते मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि ॥ ३ ॥

aśraddadhānāḥ puruṣā dharmasyāsya paramtapa
aprāpya mām nivartante mṛtyusamsāravartmani

People devoid of faith in the Dharma, failing to reach Me, O oppressor of the foes, revolve in the path of the mortal world. 3

Comment:

'Aśraddadhānāḥ puruṣā dharmasyāsya paramtapa'—'Dharma' is of two types—'Svadharma' and 'Paradharma'. Even existent self is 'Svadharma' and 'Nature and its evolutes' is 'Paradharma'. In the preceding two verses the Lord promised to explain Knowledge with Realization and eulogized it by giving eight merits. That is mentioned here as 'Dharma'. The people devoid of faith are those who are absorbed in the worldly perishable things by regarding them as real.

What a wonder it is that men have faith in bodies, families, wealth and property etc., which are kaleidoscopic and depend on them ! They don't reflect how long they will remain with bodies and how long those bodies will remain with them. They should depend on the self or on God.

'Aprāpya mām nivartante mṛtyusamsāravartmani'—The Lord says that He is present in all climes, times, things and persons and He is even attained. Those who have faith in the mundane instead of attaining Him, toss in the path of birth and death. If they are born, they are to die; if they die, they are to be born. To whatever species they go, they assume affinity with those species. Actually their connection with those bodies is constantly severing. This affinity cannot last. Such type of people revolve in the path of the mortal world. Even after reaching the higher regions as the abode of Brahmā etc., they have to return (8/16,25 ; 9/21), It means that there is rebirth so long as they don't attain Him.

The Lord while using the expression 'Mṛtyusamsāravartmani' means to say that they revolve in the path of the mortal world. In the seventh verse of the twelfth chapter it has been called the ocean of birth and death.

God by his grace, suspending the fruit of actions, bestows this human body so that men may attain salvation. But by seeing those who, by missing this golden opportunity for salvation, follow the cycle of birth and death, God repents of His action because those fools, without attaining Him, fall into a still lower plane (Gītā 16/20).

'Aprāpya mām'—This expression shows that a man has got a right to realize God. In the twentieth verse of the sixteenth chapter also Lord Krsna expresses His views that even the demoniac natured men can attain Him. So the Lord declares "Even the vilest sinner can become virtuous and secure lasting peace" (9/30-31) and "Even the most sinful of all sinners can cross over all sins by the raft of Knowledge" (4/36).

There was a city surrounded by high walls, having an exit. A blind man with the help of a stick wanted to grope his way to go out of the city. But as soon as he neared the exit, he had an itching sensation. So he began to scratch his skin. Thus he missed the exit and went ahead. This routine continued and he could not go out. Similarly this soul revolves in heaven, hell and eighty- four lac forms of lives but is unable to be liberated. So the Lord by this grace bestows this human body so that he may be freed from this cycle of birth and death. But he suffers from the itch for pleasures. Thus by hankering after prosperity and pleasures he dies and follows the cycle of birth and death.

This soul is an eternal portion of the Lord and He is its real abode. So after attaining Him there is no return, as has been declared in the Gītā time and again:

"One who knows My birth and activities divine, does not take birth again but attains Me" (4/9); "Those who merge in Him, have no return" (5/17); "Those who attain the Supreme Abode, don't return"(8/21); "Having reached which, one never returns" (15/4); "Having reached which, men don't return" (15/6). The branches of the Vedas also declare the same.

An Exceptional Fact

Generally people think that they are worldly and so birth and death is a natural process. But it is perfectly wrong. A man is a fragment of God and so he belongs to God's Abode. He is eternal and sentient while the world is kaleidoscopic, perishable and insentient. So he has no real affinity with the world but he has assumed his affinity with it. The bodies come forth again and again (8/19) while he himself remains the same.

He can never have union with the world and disunion from God. He may go to heaven, hells, eighty-four lac forms of lives or human life, he can't be separate from God. But in other births besides the human birth, he can't recognize God because his discrimination is not aroused. In this human life he has got this opportunity to recognize Him, because He by His grace has bestowed upon him the power of discrimination that he can recognize Him and attain Him. But it is very surprising and shocking that he instead of attaining Him, revolves in the path of the mortal world.

We have come to this human world to attain salvation. But we get attached to the bodies, families, wealth, property etc., which are not ours and forget that we belong to God and His Abode. So we think that it is very difficult to attain Him. The fact is that it is very easy to attain Him because He pervades every time, everywhere, all things, men, incidents and circumstances etc., and all are in Him. So we are ever with Him and He is ever with us. We can't be separate from Him and He can't be separate from us.

It means that we don't belong to this mortal world and this mortal world (including men, things, bodies etc.) does not belong to us. We are only God's and only God is ours.

Link:–In the next two verses there is the description of the sovereign science which is mentioned in the first two verses.

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥ ४ ॥
न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।
भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ॥ ५ ॥

mayā tatamidaṁ sarvaṁ jagadavyaktamūrtinā
matsthāni sarvabhūtāni na cāhaṁ teṣvavasthitaḥ
na ca matsthāni bhūtāni paśya me yogamaiśvaram
bhūtabhṛnna ca bhūtastho mamātmā bhūtabhāvanaḥ

All this universe is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest form. All beings abide in Me, but I don't abide in them. Nor do the beings dwell in Me; look at My divine Yoga (power). Being the creator and sustainer of beings, Myself does not dwell in them. 4-5

Comment:

'Mayā tatamidaṁ sarvaṁ jagadavyaktamūrtinā'—The Lord's manifest form is that which is known by mind, intellect and senses while His unmanifest form is that which is not known by mind, intellect and senses. Here the Lord by the term 'Mayā' (by Me) has explained His manifest form while by 'Avyaktamūrtinā' His unmanifest form. It means that He exists in both the forms. The Lord here wants to express His extent in entirety. The difference in His forms is according to sects and creeds. In fact He is the same though He is called by different names.

In the Gītā wherever there is description of the real and the unreal, for the real (soul) it is mentioned "By which all this is pervaded" (2/17) because being a portion of the Lord, like Him it pervades everywhere. Where there is description of worship of the Lord endowed with attributes and formless, there it is mentioned," By Whom all this is pervaded" (8/22). Where there is the description of the worship of the Lord through the performance of duty, there also it is mentioned, "By Whom all this is pervaded" (18/46). By identifying all these statements He declares," All this universe is pervaded by Me."

'Matsthāni sarvabhūtāni'—All beings abide in Me i.e., all this universe in the form of higher and lower Nature abides in Me because they emanate from Me, abide in Me and also merge in Me.

'Na cāhaṁ teṣvavasthitaḥ'—Now the Lord gives a contradictory statement by saying that He does not abide in them. The reason is that if He had abode in them, with their decay and death, He would have also decayed and died. But it is not so because the worldly bodies and things are kaleidoscopic and perishable while in Him there is not even the slightest modification. He remains detached from them, established in His Own self.

When He declares that He abides in them, He means to say that they seem to exist because of His existence.

'Na ca matsthāni bhūtāni'*—He again declares that the beings don't dwell in Him. The reason is that if the beings had dwelt in Him, like Him they would have not undergone any change in them and they would have not perished. It proves that they don't dwell in Him.

Now the contradictory statements are explained by giving an illustration. The Lord abides in the world and the world abides in the Lord; the Lord does not abide in the world and the world does not abide in the Lord. Waves are in water and water is in waves but waves have no existence of their own besides water. Similarly the world has no existence of its own besides the Lord because like waves, the world (beings) emanates from the Lord, dwells in Him and merges in Him. Thus the Lord abides in the world and the world abides in the Lord.

But if we don't accept independent existence of the waves because they have no existence besides water there is neither water in waves, nor waves in water, there remains only water which appears as waves. Similarly neither God abides in the world nor does the world abide in God; the world has no existence of its own besides the Lord, "All this is God" (7/19).

All the earthen ware vessels have nothing besides clay. So there is clay in them and they are in clay. But actually it is not so. If there had been clay in earthen ware vessels, with the destruction of the earthen ware vessels clay would have been destroyed. But it is not so. Similarly if earthen ware vessels had been in clay, they would remain safe for ever like clay. But it is not so. It means that earthen ware vessels are not in clay. In the same way neither God dwells in the world nor does the world dwell in God. If God dwelt in the world, He would die with the death of the world. But He does not die. It means that He does not dwell in the world. He is established in His own self. Similarly if the world dwelt in God, the world

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* It may also mean that beings don't accept that they are established in God, they accept them to be established in Nature so they are not established in him.

would continue to exist with the existence of God. But the world perishes. So the world does not dwell in God.

When a man, from a distance thinks of the Ganges and its banks at Haridvāra, he forms an image of the scene— devotees bathing, fish jumping and the clock tower etc., but actually they don't exist. Similarly this world is the manifestation of the Lord's pursuit of mind. But when He renounces this pursuit of mind, there is no world, there is only God.

Thus if we accept the existence of the world, God dwells in the world and the world dwells in God. But if we realize reality, there is neither God in the world nor is the world in God, there is only God. This is the view of liberated souls and the devotees.

'Paśya me yogamaiśvaram' *—The Lord's divine power is that, though He dwells in the entire world and the entire world dwells in Him, He does not dwell in the world and the world does not dwell in Him i.e., He being detached from the world, is established in Him. It means being many fold He is One and there is nothing in the universe besides Him.

The term 'Paśya' means to 'know' and 'to see.' Here it means 'to know' while in the eighth verse of the eleventh chapter it means 'to see.'

'Bhūtabhṛnna ca bhūtastho mamātmā bhūtabhāvanaḥ'—The Lord is the creator and the sustainer of all beings but He does not dwell in them i.e., He does not depend on them and is not attached to them. The same fact has been pointed out by Him in the seventeenth verse of the fifteenth chapter when He declares, "The Supreme Person is distinct from both the perishable (world) and the imperishable (soul), He is called the Supreme Soul and He pervades and sustains the three worlds."

He means to say that as He in spite of being the creator and sustainer of the world remains detached, free from egoism and excessive fondness, a striver should bring up his family and manage other affairs by remaining free from attachment, mineness and egoism etc. A striver should behold the world as the Lord's manifestation and its affairs as the sport of the Lord and should ever remain satisfied and pleased.

A Vital Fact

If a striver tries to understand, he can realize 'All this is God.' The criterion is that he remains equanimous in favourable and unfavourable circumstances, regard and disregard, praise and reproach etc. Other people may criticize his principles and beliefs, and say that his belief that in the world there is nothing besides God, is merely a fancy, he should not feel any sort of deficiency in his belief; he should remain unaffected and unperturbed. He should not seek arguments and illustrations to prove his point. His realization should be constant and natural. A striver has not to give any thought in this respect.

Link:–Now the Lord explains how the beings dwell in Him, by an illustration.

यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान्।
तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय ॥ ६ ॥

yathākāśasthito nityaṁ vāyuḥ sarvatrago mahān
tathā sarvāṇi bhūtāni matsthānītyupadhāraya

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* Here the term 'Yoga' is made from the root of the verb 'Yuj saṁyamane' because the Lord controls the whole universe. The god of death also controls the beings according to their virtuous and evil actions but his control is confined to the mortal world, while God controls infinite worlds as well as the gods of death appointed in those worlds. This power of His control is called 'Yoga.'

As the mighty wind moving everywhere ever rests in ether, likewise know that all beings rest in Me. 6

Comment:

'Yathākāśasthito nityam vāyuḥ sarvatrago mahān'—As the mighty wind moving everywhere ever rests in ether as breeze, air or wind, similarly all beings animate or inanimate, revolving in the three worlds and fourteen spheres dwell in the Lord.

The Lord has used the term, 'Matsthāni' from the fourth verse to the sixth verse three times. It means that all the beings rest in Him, they can't be separated from Him even though they accept their affinity with Matter (Nature) and its evolutes, bodies etc.

Just as wind is born of ether, remains in ether and merges in ether, the man (soul) emanates from the Lord, dwells in Him and merges into Him. When wind merges in ether, it has no existence of its own, only ether remains. Similarly when the soul merges into the Lord, only He remains.

Unlike wind, this soul does not move everywhere. But when it accepts its affinity of 'I'ness and 'Mineness' with this body, the movement of the body seems to it its own movement, though it ever rests in the Lord. Therefore the Lord in the twenty-fourth verse of the second chapter has declared the soul to be eternal, omnipresent, immovable, constant and ever-lasting. Here it has been called 'all-pervading' because of the movement of the body, otherwise it is immovable and constant. So the Lord declares that all beings rest in Him immovably and constantly.

It means that beings of all the world have no independent existence of their own, they ever rest in the Lord. But they don't realize this fact, because they assume their affinity with the body. If they renounce this assumed affinity of 'I'ness and 'Mineness' with the body, they can secure infinite bliss. So the Lord by warning human beings, declares that they ever rest in Him, so no labour or time is required to attain Him. The only obstacle is that they don't realize the fact.

'Iti upadhāraya'—A striver should know this fact that all beings totally rest in Him. By knowing this fact, he will have a disinclination for the world and realize Him. To realize Him a striver should assume with determination that the Lord Who pervades everywhere in all the things and persons etc., is his and he is His, while neither things and men etc., are his nor he is theirs.

An Important Fact

All beings rest in the Lord. But the bodies are born, they live and die because they are transitory while the soul undergoes no change. This soul has its identity with God but when it assumes its identity with the body by having a disinclination for God, it becomes conscious of its separate entity as 'I am a body'. This 'I'ness consists of two fragments —the self and non-self or it is called the embodied soul. In this 'I' ness the fragment of non-self is naturally attracted towards Nature. Having identity with the fragment of Nature, the embodied soul mistakes this attraction of Nature towards Nature as its own and thinks. 'I should get riches, pleasures and worldly enjoyments. Thus he has disinclination towards God to a great extent. It accepts the body's death as its own. Actually this soul is an eternal portion of the Lord but by having affinity with the world, it wants to enjoy worldly pleasures and to maintain the body for ever. Actually this desire is to remain with God for ever because he has his real affinity with Him. However he (embodied soul) may identify himself with the body, yet his affinity and attraction towards God can neither vanish nor there is any possibility of their vanishing. 'I should ever live; I should ever be happy; I should attain supreme joy'—in this form attraction for God subsists in him. But he commits the blunder that he wants to attain this supreme joy through worldly objects.

By an error he has a desire for pleasures which are transitory. If he realizes the reality that all the worldly pleasures are perishable and sources of pain, his desire for them perishes and his desire to attain the eternal bliss is aroused. The more this desire (want) is aroused, the more disinclination a striver has for the perishable objects etc. When he has a total disinclination for them, he realizes that he has rested in the Lord since time immemorial.

Link:–In the previous verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explained that all beings dwell in Him. But He did not explain their new creation and final dissolution which are going to be explained in the next two verses.

सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम्।
कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसृजाम्यहम्॥ ७॥

sarvabhūtāṇi kaunteya prakṛtiṁ yānti māmikām
kalpakṣaye punastāni kalpādau visṛjāmyaham

All beings, O Kaunteya, go into My Prakṛti (the Prime cause) at the end of a Kalpa (Brahmā's day) and I generate them again at the beginning of the next Kalpa. 7

Comment:

'Sarvabhūtāni kaunteya prakṛtiṁ yānti māmikām kalpakṣaye'—All beings are God's fragment and ever rest in Him. But they identify themselves with Nature and its evolutes, body etc., by having affinity of 'I'ness and 'Mineness'. So they are born and they die again and again. At the time of final dissolution when Brahmā, the creator's life period of a hundred years is over, the entire creation goes into the unmanifest state with their actions.

'Punastāni kalpādau visṛjāmyaham'—When the actions of those beings become mature to bear fruit, the Lord has His pursuit of mind to become many fold from one. This is the beginning of new creation. It has been mentioned in the third verse of the eighth chapter as follows— "The discharge of spirit, which brings forth the existence of beings is called Karma (Action)." In the fourteenth chapter it is mentioned "I place the seed" (14/3) and "I am the seed-giving Father" (14/4).

It means that at the beginning of the new creation when Brahmā emanates from the Lord, the Lord according to the action of the beings, brings them forth again. The Lord declares it in the thirteenth verse of the fourth chapter "The fourfold caste was created by Me according to their qualities and actions."

Brahmā's day is called 'Kalpa' which extends for a thousand fourfold Yugas (ages). His night is also of the same period. Brahmā lives for a hundred years. When Brahmā's life period is over, he merges into the Lord, which is called the end of a Kalpa and when he emanates from the Lord, that is the beginning of a Kalpa.

Here it is mentioned that all beings go into His Prakṛti at the end of a Kalpa but He generates them again at the beginning of the next Kalpa. It means that Prakṛti being active when gets tired, merges into God itself and beings having affinity with Prakṛti also merge in it at the time of final dissolution. But at the time of new creation the Lord brings forth those beings who had affinity with Prakṛti again by giving them the fruit of their mature actions in order to purify them. As an architect builds a house, but it falls into ruin itself, the Lord brings forth beings but they die themselves. In the same way a man (soul) being a portion of the Lord, has natural inclination for the Lord, but he has a fall himself by having desires and attachment for the perishable body and world. So a striver by attaching importance to discrimination, by renouncing desires and attachment, should be inclined towards the Lord.

प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः ।
भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात् ॥ ८ ॥

prakṛtiṁ svāmavṣṭabhya visṛjāmi pūnaḥ punaḥ
bhūtagrāmamimaṁ kṛtsnamavaśaṁ prakṛtervaśāt

Laying hold of My Nature, I bring forth, again and again this whole multitude of beings, subject to the influence of their own nature. 8

Comment:

'Bhūta grāmamimaṁ kṛtsnamavaśaṁ prakṛtervaśāt'—Here the term 'Prakṛti' stands for individual Prakṛti. At final dissolution all beings merge in Nature, and Nature merges into the Lord. But at the beginning of creation when the actions of those beings become mature to bear fruit, the Lord has His pursuit of mind to become many fold from one. So there is commotion in Nature, When curd is churned, butter and butter-milk become separate. Out of them butter flows over butter-milk. Here butter is Sāttvika, butter-milk is Tamas and the action of churning is Rajas. Similarly from the commotion in Prakṛti (Nature) also the three attributes (qualities) —goodness, activity (passion) and inertia (ignorance) are born. Out of the three modes, heaven, this mortal world and the under-world are born. In these three worlds, beings are born according to their actions and nature. This description is also given in the third and fourth verses of the fourteenth chapter. Where 'Prakṛti' has been called 'Mahadbrahma' and 'the Lord's pursuit of mind to become manifold' has been declared as 'placing the seed of all life.'

At dissolution the soul merges into God but it does not attain emancipation because it merges having its modes. Had it renounced its modes, it might have emancipated for ever, and would have not undergone the wheel of birth and death.

Attachment to these modes is the cause of beings' birth in good and evil wombs. So a being remains under its control. In the nineteenth verse of the eighth chapter there is the description of a being who remains under the control of his own individual nature. In the fifth verse of the third chapter there is the description of helplessness under one's nature after birth. A being is tied by these Nature-born modes in all the three worlds as is also described in the fifth verse of the fourteenth chapter.

'Prakṛtim svāmavṣṭabhya'—Prakṛti (Nature) is an uncommon power of the Lord, which can neither be called different from Him nor one with Him. The Lord as the supervisor, keeping Nature under control, brings forth beings at the beginning of the creation because all changes take place in Nature, not in the Lord. It does not mean that God Himself is incapable, dependent and weak to do so.

As a man performs actions by controlling his mind and senses etc. (But when he comes under the sway of mind and senses etc., he instead of being their master becomes a slave to them), the Lord brings forth beings by keeping Nature under control without getting entangled in her.

'Visṛjāmi punaḥ punaḥ' —The Lord brings forth this whole multitude of beings in different moving and unmoving species, different bodies. In physical bodies of some of the species there is preponderance of earth element, in some of fire element, in some of air element. Thus the Lord creates many forms of bodies.

Here one point is to be understood. The Lord brings forth only those beings who have become slave to their nature by having affinity, of 'I' and 'mine' with personal nature (body). On being a slave to his personal nature, he becomes a slave to the Cosmic Nature. In case he is not a slave to such Cosmic Nature, he is not reborn.

Link:–A man is bound by actions when he is attached to them or accepts himself as the doer. But the Lord is not bound by actions. Why? The clarification comes in the next verse.

न च मां तानि कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय।
उदासीनवदासीनमसक्तं तेषु कर्मसु ॥ ९ ॥

na ca mām tāni karmāṇi nibadhnanti dhanañjaya
udāsīnavadāsīnamasaktam teṣu karmasu

O Dhanañjaya (Arjuna), those actions, however, don't bind Me, Who remain like one unconcerned, unattached to those actions. 9

Comment:

'Udāsīnavadāsīnamasaktam teṣu karmasu'—The Lord is not attached to the action which He performs in bringing forth the whole multitude of beings because He remains like one unattached and indifferent i.e., He is not happy at creation and sad at dissolution. Why has the Lord said that He remains like one unattached and indifferent? The term 'like' has been used because God knows the fact that actions etc., have no existence of their own besides Him, so how can He remain unconcerned and unattached to His own self? So the term 'like' has been used for the person who remains indifferent and unattached to them by accepting their independent existence.

'Na ca mām tāni karmāṇi nibadhnanti'—In the preceding verse the Lord declared, "I bring forth beings repeatedly. Such activities have been termed here as 'Tāni karmāṇi' (those actions). The Lord is not bound by the actions because He has not the least affinity with the actions and their fruit. The Lord by saying so, advises human beings that they will also not be bound by actions, if they perform them without having attachment for them and their fruit. Otherwise they will have to be bound and follow the wheel of birth and death. How surprising it is that a man is bound by having affinity with those actions and their fruits, things and men etc., that perish ! The mundane objects do not remain but affinity with them persists. The men die but affinity with them remains." How foolish of him !

Link:–After describing detachment and indifference in the previous verse, now Lord Kṛṣṇa describes how He is non-doer, the supervisor.

मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सूयते सचराचरम्।
हेतुनानेन कौन्तेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते ॥ १० ॥

mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sacarācaram
hetunānena kaunteya jagadviparivartate

O Son of Kuntī, with Me as the supervisor, Nature brings forth the whole creation, both animate and inanimate; the world, therefore, revolves. 10

Comment:

'Mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sacarācaram'—The Lord animates Nature to bring forth the whole creation. As different machines such as refrigerators, heaters, trains, lifts, televisions and X-rays etc., function with the power of electricity; the creation, preservation, destruction and all the mundane activities are performed by Nature with the power of God Who animates Nature and Himself remains as the supervisor. It means that as the electric

power manifests itself through machines, the Lord's power manifests itself through Nature.

The Lord is the actionless supervisor while the world revolves i.e., the world undergoes changes. These changes will continue to occur so long as beings have their affinity of 'I'ness and 'Mineness' for Nature and its evolutes, bodies etc., and thus they will go on revolving in the path of the mortal world. It means that without God-Realization they can't rest permanently anywhere. Nature revolves them in the path of birth and death (Gītā 9/3).

All beings are established in God and so God is attained to them but they assume their affinity of 'I'ness and 'Mineness' with Nature and so Nature brings them forth and merges them in her under the supervision of the Lord. In fact Nature has no power to bring them forth and to merge them because it is insentient. They can't die and take birth because they, being the portion of the Lord, are imperishable, sentient and unaltered. But by assuming their affinity of 'I'ness and 'Mineness' with objects and persons born of Nature, they have to take birth and they have to die.

All actions of the entire universe such as creation, preservation and dissolution are performed by Nature, in Nature and are of Nature. But Nature derives the power of action from God Who remains actionless. As all actions approved and disapproved by the scriptures are performed in the light of the sun and these actions result in favourable and unfavourable circumstances for beings, but the sun and its light remain the same without undergoing any change; similarly there is a lot of modification in the world but the Lord and His portion, soul remain the same. There is no change ever possible in the self (soul). A man thinks that there is a change in him because he identifies himself with the body and the world. If he accepts his true affinity with God (which is natural) his true love for God will be spontaneously aroused.

Link:–The ignorant people, who without having an inclination for the Lord, follow the opposite path, have been described in the next two verses.

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम्।
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम्॥ ११॥

avajānanti māṁ mūḍhā mānuṣīṁ tanumāśritam
paraṁ bhāvamajānanto mama bhūtamaheśvaram

Fools disregard Me as one putting on the human body, not knowing My supreme nature as the Great Lord of beings. 11

Comment:

'Paraṁ bhāvamajānanto mama bhūtamaheśvaram'—The Great Lord is He Who is the ruler, patron, director and supervisor of Nature, from Whom Nature derives power to create, preserve and destroy the animate and inanimate beings, and Who is the master of the gods who control their own worlds to which different beings go according to their actions. Without His will not even a leaf of a tree moves. This is His lordliness. This has been described here by the expression 'Bhūtamaheśvaram'.

By 'Paraṁ bhāvam' He means that fools don't know His supreme nature that He is free to make any drastic change. They don't know that He transcends the perishable Matter and is also superior to the imperishable soul and He is known as the Supreme Person in the Veda (Gītā 15/18). So they slight Him taking Him as an ordinary mortal in the human form.

'Mānuṣīṁ tanumāśritam'—They treat the Incarnation of the Lord as an ordinary human being. As a common man by identifying himself with the body thinks that the family honour or dishonour is his own and gain and loss of property etc., is also

his own. As common beings were not manifest before birth and will not be manifest after death, they are manifest only in the interim (2/28), the deluded persons treat Him such a common man. They regard Him as a slave to the human body like a common man.

The human body of the Lord is not the fruit of any action. He incarnates by His own free will (Śrīmadbhāgavata 10/33/35) as a fish, a tortoise, a boar etc., He does not depend on the body, but the body, an evolute of Nature, depends on Him because He manifests Himself keeping His Nature under control (Gītā 4/6).

The fools, treating the Lord as an ordinary being, don't seek refuge in Him because they don't know His divine play, rather they consider Him a slave to body. The same fact has been pointed out in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses of the seventh chapter when the Lord declares "Not knowing My unsurpassable and undecaying supreme state, these ignorant folk do not recognise Me as the unborn and imperishable Supreme Spirit." So they instead of taking refuge in the Lord, seek refuge in other gods (Gītā 7/20).

'Avajānanti mām* mūḍhā'—The fools disregard the Lord under Whose supervision Nature brings forth and merges infinite universes, Who controls the activities of the universes and Who by His grace has bestowed this human body. They think low of Him by regarding Him as a comman earth-bound man, attaching importance to the mundane prosperity and pleasures.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord describes the ways of those fools who are not able to understand the Divinity in the Incarnation of the Lord.

मोघाशा मोघकर्माणो मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः ।
राक्षसीमासुरीं चैव प्रकृतिं मोहिनीं श्रिताः ॥ १२ ॥

moghāśā moghakarmāṇo moghajñānā vicetasaḥ
rākṣasīmāsurīṁ caiva prakṛtim mohinīṁ śritāḥ

Those fools with vain hopes, vain actions and vain knowledge have embraced a nature which is fiendish, demoniacal and delusive. 12

Comment:

'Moghāśā'—The hopes of those people, who by having a disinclination for God have a desire for pleasures and heaven, are vain because it is not a rule that such hopes must be fulfilled. Even if they are fulfilled, they perish after bearing fruit. Therefore until a man attains God, all his hopes and desires are in vain because they with their fruit are perishable (Gītā 7/23).

'Moghakarmāṇo'—The actions of the people who have a disinclination for God, are vain because if they perform actions approved by the scriptures for their fruit, they with their fruit will perish. Their fruit will carry the people to the higher regions from where they will have a return. Thus they waste their time, energy and intellect in vain, they remain blank, being deprived of the real gain of human life.

It means that man, being a portion of God, is eternal while actions and their fruits are perishable. So he will gain nothing besides pain and disquietude by performing actions for their fruit, unless and until he attains God. On the other hand the actions that are performed for God to please Him and are offered to Him, are not perishable but real (Gītā 17/27).

In the twenty-eighth verse of the seventeenth chapter also Lord Kṛṣṇa declares "Sacrifice, gift and penance and any other

* Here the term 'Mām' has been used for the same Lord (God) Who has been described from the fourth verse to the tenth verse of this chapter.

action performed without faith, is declared as unreal (non-existent). It is of no use here or hereafter." It means that a man having disinclination for God, by performing actions such as sacrifice, gift and penance etc., can't realize God. So his actions are vain.

'Moghajñānāḥ'—The knowledge of languages, scripts, arts, literature and the universe etc., of those people, who have a disinclination for God, is vain because that knowledge can't lead them to salvation, they can't be free from the bondage of birth and death. By having a disinclination for God even after acquiring a lot of knowledge, they will follow the wrong course in the same way as an accountant can't maintain the right account if there is an error in any number in the account. Thus they will have a down fall.

'Vicetasaḥ'—They are senseless (fools) because they can't discriminate between the real and the unreal, gains and loss, bondage and liberation etc.

'Rākṣasīmāsurīṁ caiva prakṛtiṁ mohinīṁ śritāḥ'—Those senseless persons having a disinclination for God embrace a nature which is fiendish, demoniacal and delusive.

Persons with demoniacal nature are those who without caring for the pain and loss of others are ever engaged in their selfish motive, in fulfilling their desires and hoarding money for the enjoyment of sensual pleasures etc.

Persons with fiendish nature are those who become angry with those whom they think obstacles to the fulfilment of their desires and so they harm and ruin them for their own selfish motive.

Persons possessing a delusive nature are those who without rhyme or reason trouble others (They shoot the flying birds and hit a sleeping dog and are pleased).

Out of all the above mentioned three natures, the root nature is demoniacal. This demonical nature is of three types. Demonical nature is of those in whom desire predominates; fiendish of those in whom anger predominates and delusive of those in whom delusion predominates. It means that desire is the root of demoniacal nature. If the desire is not fulfilled, anger sprouts forth (Gītā 2/62), and from anger ensues delusion (2/63). This delusion is born of greed and folly also.

Link:–After describing the ways of the fools in the eleventh and twelfth verses, now the Lord describes the ways of the devotees.

महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।
भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥ १३ ॥

mahātmānastu māṁ pārtha daivīṁ prakṛtimāśritāḥ
bhajantyananyamanaso jñātvā bhūtādimavyayam

But great souls, who possess a divine nature, knowing Me as the prime cause of creation; and imperishable, worship Me constantly with undivided mind. 13

Comment:

'Mahātmānastu māṁ pārtha daivīṁ prakṛtimāśritāḥ'—Here the term 'Tu' (But) has been used to explain singularity of the devotees possessing the divine nature which runs counter to the delusive and demoniacal nature mentioned in the previous verse.

'Daivīṁ prakṛtim'—Here 'Daiva' stands for God (Paramātmā) and 'Prakṛtim' stands for nature. God is 'Sat' (Real). So all the good qualities and conducts are included in divine nature.

The divine traits (Gītā 16/1-3) are common and every man has a full claim over them. Now it depends upon him whether he

possesses them or not. Those who by possessing them, have an inclination for God, attain salvation.

One is a discovery while the other is creation or compound. There is discovery of the eternal entity which is ever-existent while an object which is born is perishable. The divine traits belong to God and so they are divine property. A human being, being a fragment of God, has these divine traits as they are his inherent property. This is discovery. They are not born, they are not the personal property.

Divine traits are natural. If a man thinks that he has cultivated these traits with his effort, he feels proud. But if he feels that they are natural divine gift, he is not proud. A man's pride is aroused only in imperfection. When a man has pride by saying, "I always speak the truth", it means that sometimes he tells a lie also otherwise he can't have pride.

A man may possess divine traits only when his only aim is to attain God. By depending on those traits to realize God, he can have an inclination for Him and then instead of having pride, he possesses politeness, simplicity and modesty and receives ever enhancing zeal in spiritual discipline.

The men, who having a disinclination for God, are engaged in perishable pleasures and prosperity, are little souls or deluded while those who have an inclination for God and depend only on Him are great souls.

'Bhajantyananyamanaso jñātvā bhūtādimavyayam'—The Lord is imperishable and is the prime cause of creation. He is without beginning and end. Infinite universes emanate from Him, remain established in Him and merge in Him, but He remains the same without any change.

Out of the worldly things if a portion is taken out from it, it becomes less. For example if an ornament is made from a lump of gold, or a utensil from a lump of clay, the lump becomes smaller. But there is no change in the Lord, even though infinite universes emanate from Him, because He is the imperishable seed (Gītā 9/18). Those who know Him imperishable and the prime cause of creation, worship Him constantly with undivided mind.

The more merits a man knows of something, the more engaged he is in it. Those who come to know that the Lord is the supreme, their minds are so much engrossed in Him that they never think of the pleasures either of this world or the next world. Their minds are not attracted towards any thing or anyone besides the Lord. So they adore Him with undivided mind.

Worship of the Lord in anyway is fruitful. But the devotee who worships Him with exclusive devotion by having affinity 'I am only God's and only God is mine' is immensely benefited. A devotee is engaged in worship for a few hours. His relationship with God remains so long as he is engaged in worship. But the other devotee regards himself as God's and God as his. His relationship with God is ever lasting because this relationship is real and eternal. Whatever actions mundane or spiritual he performs with his body, senses, mind and intellect, are to please the Lord and so are different forms of worship to Him. This is adoration with undivided mind, which has been described in the Gītā time and again (8/14; 9/22; 12/6; 14/26 etc.).

Link:–Having described His devotees in the preceding verse the Lord in the next verse describes how they worship Him.

सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रताः ।
नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ॥ १४ ॥

satataṁ kīrtayanto māṁ yatantaśca dṛḍhavratāḥ
namasyantaśca māṁ bhaktyā nityayuktā upāsate

Constantly chanting My names and glories, striving firm in vows, prostrating before Me, they worship Me with devotion, ever stead fast. 14

Comment:

'Nityayuktāḥ'—A man can remain always steadfast only in worshipping God, not in mundane pleasures and accumulation of prosperity, because he gets disgusted with pleasures and loses taste for accumulation sometimes but his determination and aim of God-Realization ever remain the same.

Man (soul) being a portion of God, has real affinity for Him. So long as a man does not recognize that affinity, he has a disinclination for the Lord and assumes that he is separate from Him. But when he recognizes his eternal affinity for Him, he is inclined towards Him and can't remain separate from Him.

The natural affinity of a man with God 'I am God's and God is mine' ever remains steadfast in wakefulness, sleep, sound sleep; in loneliness, during worship and in company while performing different actions. As a man always remembers that he is the son of Mr. X, a striver accepts his affinity with the Lord that He Who is the prime cause of creation, the Imperishable, the Supreme Lord is his and he is His, and thus he ever remains steadfast.

'Dṛḍhavratāḥ'—The worldly people who are engaged in pleasures and prosperity can't be firm in spiritual vows (Gītā 2/44). But those who have changed the sense of 'I'ness from their hearts by accepting the fact 'We are God's and God is ours' they resolve "We are not of the world and the world is not ours." So we have not to hanker after worldly pleasures and prosperity but we have to serve others by regarding them as God's.

Thus they remain steadfast in their resolution and never deviate from it, because their aim is God-Realization and they are His fragments.

'Yatantaśca'—As the worldly people nourish their family with attachment and strive for pleasures and prosperity, so do devotees strive for God-Realization ardently. Efforts of such devotees seemingly mundane are not really mundane as their aim is God. So their activities are directed towards God.

'Bhaktyā kīrtayanto mām'—The devotees sometimes chant the names and glories of the Lord, sometimes read the scriptures and sometimes give divine talks or hold divine discourses and so on. All of them are hymns of the Lord.

'Namasyantaśca'—They prostrate before the Lord by having the feeling that whatever divine traits they possess and whatever spiritual inclination they have, is only by His grace. They hold that their promptness and inclination towards God is not the result of their efforts. The virtues and good conduct have been developed in them by His grace. So they can merely prostrate.

'Satatam mām upāsate'—The devotees having undivided devotion perform all actions whether spiritual or even mundane such as eating, drinking, sleeping, waking, business and farming etc., only for Him to please Him.

Link:–Strivers are of several kinds. The strivers, who follow the Discipline of Devotion have been described in the previous two verses. Now He describes the other strivers.

ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मामुपासते ।
एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतोमुखम् ॥ १५ ॥

jñānayajñena cāpyanye yajanto māmupāsate
ekatvena pṛthaktvena bahudhā viśvatomukham

Others worship Me (as the One, Undivided Pure Consciousness) through their offering of Knowledge; while still others worship Me in My Universal Form, taking Me to be diverse in diverse celestial forms. 15

Comment:

[As hunger of the hungry persons is the same and the same is the satisfaction after having meals, but their taste is different. Similarly strivers have the same need to realize God and they attain the same Lord but according to their faith, interests and taste their methods of worship are different. But there is one important difference. Those who want to seek satisfaction in perishable worldly things, are never satisfied. But those who having a disinclination for the world, are inclined towards spiritualism, are perfectly satisfied after attaining God, and then for them nothing remains—to be done, to be known and to be achieved.]

'Jñānayajñena cāpyanye yajanto māmupāsate ekatvena'—Several strivers following the Discipline of Knowledge, by renouncing the unreal, through discrimination worship His attributeless formless aspect regarding the pure consciousness as his very self.

They regard the kaleidoscopic world as non-existent because it neither existed in the past nor will exist in future and at present also it is continuously perishing. So it seems to exist in the light of the Lord Who really exists. So they behold the cosmic consciousness constantly.

Here the term 'Yajantaḥ' means that they have reverence only for God—this is their worship.

'Pṛthaktvena bahudhā viśvatomukham'—Some other strivers following the Discipline of Action, regarding themselves as servants, and the world as the Universal Form of the Lord, serve it with their bodies, senses, minds, intellects, possessions, resources and actions. They ever serve the Lord in the form of public (common men) and by God's grace attain perfection.

Link:–How can the divergent and conflicting forms of worship reach the same Lord? The Lord gives the answer in the next four verses.

अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाहमहमौषधम्।
मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम्॥ १६॥ *
पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः।
वेद्यं पवित्रमोङ्कार ऋक्साम यजुरेव च॥ १७॥
गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत्।
प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम्॥ १८॥

ahaṁ kraturahaṁ yajñaḥ svadhāhamahamauṣadham
mantro'hamahamevājyamahamagniraham hutam
pitāhamasya jagato mātā dhātā pitāmahaḥ
vedyaṁ pavitramoṁkāra ṛksāma yajureva ca
gatirbhartā prabhuḥ sākṣī nivāsaḥ śaraṇaṁ suhṛt
prabhavaḥ pralayaḥ sthānaṁ nidhānaṁ bījamavyayam

I am the Vaidika ritual, I am the sacrifice, I am the offering to the departed, I am the medicinal herb, I am the sacred formula, I am the clarified butter, I am the sacred fire and I am the act of offering oblation into the fire. I am the knowable, the purifier, the sacred syllable Om

* The Lord from the seventh to the twelfth chapter while describing divergent forms of worship, has used the term 'I' again and again. In the sixteenth verse He has used the term eight times, more than used in any other verse.

and the three Vedas – Ṛk, Sāma and Yajus. I am the father, sustainer, mother, grand-father, goal, supporter, Lord, witness, abode, refuge, disinterested friend, origin, end, resting place, store-house and the imperishable seed of this universe. 16—18

Comment:

[When a devotee according to his faith and reverence establishes his affinity with the Lord in His many fold aspects, his affinity is with the real because in the universe there is no existence besides the Lord. He should admit this fact without having any doubt that in the universe apart from God, there is no object, no thought and no act. Similarly the Lord is manifest in diverse entities—there is no doubt about it. If a doubt lurks in the mind how all objects can be the manifestations of God, this doubt deprives the striver of emancipation. Rather it puts him to trouble. Therefore it should be accepted firmly that in gross or subtle form or as effect and cause whatever is seen, heard, grasped or assumed is only God. This all-pervasiveness of God has been described from the sixteenth to the nineteenth verses.]

'Ahaṁ kraturahaṁ yajñaḥ svadhāhamahamauṣadham'— 'Kratu' is a Vedic ritual while 'Yajña' denotes sacrificial worship. The offerings made to the manes is 'Svadhā'. The vegetables, food and medicinal herbs such as the seed of the sesame plant, rice, barley etc., are 'Auṣadha'. The Lord Himself is every one of the above mentioned things.

'Mantro'hamahamevājyamahamagniraham hutam'—He is the sacred formula which is chanted at the time of sacrificial worship. He is the clarified butter, the sacred fire and the act of offering oblation into the fire.

'Vedyaṁ pavitramoṁkāra ṛksāma yajureva ca'—The Lord is the knowledge of the method of sacrificial worship which should be performed systematically in order to satisfy desires or to get rid of them.

Acts of sacrifice, gift and penance are purifying to the wise (Gītā 18/5). In them the articles of oblations which are offered without expecting the fruit and the action which is performed without expecting its fruit are also purified. That purity is the Lord's manifestation.

Act of sacrifice, gift and penance as enjoined by the scriptures, are always begun with the utterance of the sacred syllable 'Oṁ' (Gītā 17/24). So the Lord is Oṁ.

The Vedas deal with the methods of Vedic rituals and sacrificial worship etc. The Ṛgveda is the collection of the aphorisms of sacred formulas with regular order of words, the Sāmaveda is the collection of sacred formulas and prayers which are sung with rhythm during sacrifices and the Yajus consists of sacred formulas with irregular order of words. All the three are the forms of the Lord.

'Pitāhamasya jagato mātā dhātā pitāmahaḥ'—The Lord creates the entire universe. So He is called the source and dissolution of the whole universe (Gītā 7/6). He also protects the universe, so He is father as is also mentioned in the forty-third verse of the eleventh chapter.

The Lord sustains the whole universe in all respects. He decides the destiny of all beings. Therefore He is the sustainer.

The Lord gives birth to beings in different wombs according to the fruit of their actions. So He is the mother of the entire creation.

He is the grand-father because Brahmā, the creator of the world is the father of the world in common knowledge and Brahmā is born of Him. From this angle He is the father of Brahmā. Arjuna has also called Him the Primal Cause of Brahmā (Gītā 11/37).

'Gatirbhartā prabhuḥ sākṣī nivāsaḥ śaraṇam suhṛt'—The Lord is the Supreme Goal of beings. He is the

supporter of beings because all sustenance comes from Him. He is the owner and Lord of the universe. He is the witness because He knows all beings all the time very well. He is the 'Abode' (Nivāsa) because beings rest in Him. He gives shelter to beings, so He is refuge. He is the disinterested friend because He is their well-wisher without expecting any reward.

'Prabhavaḥ pralayaḥ sthānaṁ nidhānaṁ bījamavyayam'—The entire universe emanates from Him and again merges in Him. So He is the origin (the material cause and the efficient cause) and end of the entire universe (Gītā 7/6).

He is the resting place (Sthāna)* of the universe because at the time of final dissolution the entire universe (including Nature) merges in Him and rests in Him.

He is the store-house (Nidhāna) because in all the states of creation and dissolution etc., Nature, the universe, soul and everything else reside, in Him only.

The Lord is the imperishable seed because an ordinary seed is born of the tree and then it perishes when the plant sprouts up. But the Lord after creating infinite universes remains the same and is without origin and end. He can never perish.

तपाम्यहमहं वर्षं निगृह्णाम्युत्सृजामि च।
अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन॥ १९॥

tapāmyahamahaṁ varṣaṁ nigṛhṇāmyutsṛjāmi ca
amṛtaṁ caiva mṛtyuśca sadasaccāhamarjuna

Arjuna, I as the sun, radiate heat, withhold and send forth rain. I am immortality as well as death; I am being and non-being both. 19

Comment:

'Tapāmyahamahaṁ varṣaṁ nigṛhṇāmyutsṛjāmi ca'—The Lord in the form of the sun cures ailments of beings by drying the impure and dirty materials which cause ailments on the earth. As the sun the Lord radiates heat to dry the poisonous matter of the medicinal herb and other vegetations. He dries water, to make it pure and sweet and then sends it forth as rain for the welfare of beings.

'Amṛtaṁ caiva mṛtyuśca sadasaccāhamarjuna'—The Lord is immortality as well as death. He is immortality—it means that all beings live by sustaining their life-breath (they do not die). He is death—it means the departure of life-breath from the body of all beings (their death). He is being as well as non-being, cause as well as effect. It means that as a great soul regards that all is God, in the view of the Lord also He is all, though a common man views death and immortality, being and non-being; gross and subtle; Sattva, Rajas and Tamas; cause and effect; water and ice etc., different. But in fact the world is a manifestation of the Lord. As in the clothes made of yarn, there is nothing besides yarn, in things, actions, incidents, circumstances and men etc. There is nothing else besides God.

Link:—After describing the ways of the fools and the devotees now in the next two verses He, the Lord, describes the ways of the enjoyment-seekers who having a discrimination for God, perform sacrifice etc., in order to reap their fruit. Therefore they repeatedly come and go.

* 'Nivāsa' (Abode) is the place where beings reside during the span of creation while 'Sthāna' (resting place) is the place where the universe (including Nature) remains merged in the period of dissolution.

त्रैविद्या मां सोमपाः पूतपापा
यज्ञैरिष्ट्वा स्वर्गतिं प्रार्थयन्ते ।
ते पुण्यमासाद्य सुरेन्द्रलोक-
मश्नन्ति दिव्यान्दिवि देवभोगान् ॥ २० ॥

traividyā māṁ somapāḥ pūtapāpā
yajñairiṣṭvā svargatiṁ prārthayante
te puṇyamāsādya surendraloka-
maśnanti divyāndivi devabhogān

Those who perform actions with some interested motive as laid down in the three Vedas and drink the sap of soma plant, and thus purged of sin, worshipping Me as Indra, by sacrifices, pray to seek access to heaven, attaining Indra's paradise as the result of their good deeds, enjoy the celestial pleasures of the gods. 20

Comment:

'Traividyā maṁ somapāḥ pūtapāpā yajñairiṣṭvā svargatiṁ prārthayante te puṇyamāsādya surendralokamaśnanti divyān-divi devabhogān'—The worldly people are generally engaged in worldly pleasures. There are others who attaching value to perishable objects, aspire for the heavenly pleasures and so perform actions with a selfish motive as laid down in the three Vedas for them. The term 'Traividyā' has been used for such people.

Soma is a plant about which it is said that in the bright half of a lunar month everyday on it one leaf sprouts forth and upto the full-moon-day there are fifteen leaves while in the dark half of a lunar month everyday one leaf falls and in fifteen days all the leaves fall.* Those who perform religious sacrifice, purify the sap of soma plant with Vedic sacred formulas and then drink it. Thus they are purged of those sins which are obstacles to heavenly enjoyments.

The Lord in the preceding verse declared that He is being and non-being both. So here the term 'Mām' has been used for Indra, the lord of the gods, because when He is being and non-being both, He is also Indra. Moreover the persons who perform sacrifice in order to reach heaven, worship Indra and pray to him to grant them an access to heaven.

With the view to attain heaven they sing hymns in praise of Indra and beg of him residence in heaven—both are prayers. As a reward of the performance of Vedic and Paurāṇika rituals they get celestial enjoyments. Those heavenly pleasures are far more charming and singular than those of the mortal world. There they enjoy five sense-objects of sound, touch, form, taste and smell. Moreover they also enjoy other luxuries, honour and glory etc.

* The Soma plant which has fifteen leaves, whose shape is like a serpent, whose knots are red from where the leaves sprout forth, with the five parts (root, branch, leaves, flower and fruit) brought on the full moon day binds mercury. The soma tree also with five organs (root, bark, leaves, flower and fruit) binds mercury and makes its ash and so on. Out of the soma plant and soma tree the soma plant possesses more properties. In the dark fortnight each day one leaf falls from this part while in the light fortnight each day one leaf falls from this part while in the light fortnight each day one leaf sprouts forth. Thus this plant grows. If the root-fruit (kanda) of this plant is taken out on the full-moon-day, it is very useful. The mercury bound in this root-fruit with thorn-apple makes the body iron-like strong and it has a hundred thousand times-more effect i.e., its one particle changes a hundred thousand particles of iron into gold. This soma plant is very rarely found.

ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं
क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।
एवं त्रयीधर्ममनुप्रपन्ना
गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते ॥ २१ ॥

te tam bhuktvā svargalokam viśālam
kṣīṇe puṇye martyalokam viśanti
evam trayīdharmamanuprapannā
gatāgatam kāmakāmā labhante

Having enjoyed the extensive heavenly world, they return to the world of mortals on the exhaustion of their merits. Thus taking recourse to action with interested motive enjoined by the three Vedas and seeking worldly enjoyments they repeatedly go and come. 21

Comment:

'Te tam bhuktvā svargalokam viśālam kṣīṇe puṇye martyalokam viśanti evam trayīdharma-manuprapannā gatāgatam kāmakāmā labhante'—The heavenly world has been called extensive because it is vast, there the age is longer and pleasures are in abundance.

Those who want to go to heaven instead of depending on God, depend on the actions with interested motive enjoined by the three Vedas. They go to heaven and are obliged to return to this world after their merits run out. Here again they acquire merits and thus the wheel of going and coming back revolves.

If the meaning of 'Pūtapāpā' of the previous verse is taken as those who are purged of sins and the meaning of 'Kṣīṇe puṇye' is taken as those whose merits are destroyed, it means that being free from all sins and merits they should have been liberated from bondage. But they don't attain liberation, they rather go and come. So the terms mean that they are purged of those sins which are obstacles to go to heaven; and their merits are exhausted after enjoying heavenly pleasures. Therefore here it is not the context of the exhaustion of their all sins and merits.

Link:–But what about those who depend only on the Lord? Their position is explained by the Lord in the next verse.

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ २२ ॥

ananyāścintayanto māṁ ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣāṁ nityābhiyuktānāṁ yogakṣemaṁ vahāmyaham

To those men who worship Me alone, thinking of no one else, who are ever-devout, I provide gain and security. 22

Comment:

'Ananyāścintayanto māṁ ye janāḥ paryupāsate'—Those, who admit that the entire universe is the Lord's manifestation and all the activities and changes are His sport, don't attach importance to anything

else besides the Lord because everything except the Lord, is perishable. They have no desire even for the maintenance of their bodies. So they have an exclusive devotion for Him. Whatever action– moving, eating, drinking or talking etc., they perform is in order to please God. On account of regarding the Lord as loving and glorious, the memory of the Lord in devotees is constant and natural. These devotees are called 'Ananya' (exclusively devoted) because for them the Lord is both the means and the end. They have a firm conviction that they have to take refuge in God only, they have to adore and think of Him only and they have to attain Him only. They don't harbour any other desire except that of the Lord.

'Teṣāṁ nityābhiyuktānām'— 'Nityābhiyuktānām' (of those ever united) are those who having undivided devotion think of Him and perform all actions in order to please Him. They have a disinclination for the world, an inclination for the Lord and perform actions by depending on Him. In other words their disinclination for the world is their 'Ananyatā' (exclusive devotion), their inclination for the Lord is their 'Cintana' (constant memory) and in all active and inactive conditions tances whatever he does is their 'Upāsanā' (worship). Those devotees who possess these three traits are 'Nityābhiyuktā' (ever devout).

'Yogakṣemaṁ vahāmyaham'— 'Yoga' means the provision of the means required and 'Kṣema' means security of what has been provided.

But the fact is that 'Yoga' means either to attend or not to attend to the needs of devotees because the Lord is the disinterested friend of devotees, so He remains engrossed in their welfare. So He provides only those means which are useful for their welfare. Similarly He protects what has been provided only if its security is a means in their spiritual progress. Otherwise He will destroy it. Destruction of harmful thing is 'Kṣema' (security). Therefore His devout devotees remain pleased and satisfied in all circumstances because they believe that those circumstances have been created by God's will and so they will enable them to attain salvation. They become puppets in the hands of the Lord and God's will becomes their will.

In fact 'Yoga' means affinity with God and 'Kṣema' means salvation. From this view-point the Lord strengthens a devotee's affinity with Him and tries to lead him to salvation. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa in the forty-fifth verse of the second chapter orders Arjuna. "Don't worry about 'Yoga' and 'Kṣema''. It means that the devotee should be free from any care for gain and security.

'Vahāmyaham'—It means that as a mother looks after her small son and provides him with all necessities, the Lord provides all the means required by the devotees.

Link:–After explaining the position of those devotees who depend only on the Lord, He describes in the next verse those devotees who worship other gods.

येऽप्यन्यदेवता भक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ २३ ॥

ye'pyanyadevatā bhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
te'pi māmeva kaunteya yajantyavidhipūrvakam

Even those devotees who, endowed with faith, worship other gods, worship Me alone, O son of Kuntī, though not in accordance with rules. 23

Comment:

'Ye'pyanyadevatā bhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ'—These devotees who have not realized that the Lord is

all-being and non-being (Gītā 9/19) worship other gods because they think that other gods are apart from and independent of Him and by their grace they will gain everything.

'Te'pi māmeva kaunteya yajantya-vidhipūrvakam'—The devotees who worship other gods, actually worship Him because in the whole universe there is nothing besides Him. Therefore their worship to other gods is worship to Him only but that is not in accordance with rules. The Lord by the expression 'Yajant-yavidhipūrvakam' does not mean that they don't possess knowledge—what sort of worship—materials, what sacred text should be used and what sort of worship should be done. But it means that they regard other gods separate from the Lord. They worship other gods because their wisdom has been led astray by desires (Gītā 7/20). But the fact is that whatever power the other gods have, it has come to them from the Lord and so it is only His power.

It means that if a devotee worships any deity regarding him as the Lord without having any desire for fruit, that will be worship to God and it will lead him to God-Realization. Secondly if he worships the Lord with a desire, he will be regarded as a devotee —the seeker of worldly objects, the sufferer etc., whom the Lord has called noble (Gītā 7/18).

In fact all is God. So every kind of worship, service and good offered to others is only an offering to God. As rain-water in the form of stream, river and water fall etc., flows into the sea (because that water comes from the sea and belongs to the sea), whomsoever a devotee worships, he worships only God.

Link:–But why is their worship not in accordance with rules? The explanation comes.

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च ।
न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते ॥ २४ ॥

ahaṁ hi sarvayajñānāṁ bhoktā ca prabhureva ca
na tu māmabhijānanti tattvenātaścyavanti te

I am verily the enjoyer of all sacrifices and I am the Lord. But they don't know Me in reality; hence they fall. 24

Comment:

[In the second chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, "Those who are deeply attached to pleasures and prosperity, can't attain the determinate intellect concentrated on God" (2/44). In God-Realizaton there are two obstacles—to have the sense of enjoyership and to have the possessive spirit. These two pervert intellect of a man. They force a man to have a disinclination for God. In childhood a person depends on his mother and can't live without her. But when he grows young and is married he becomes a husband to his wife and does not like his mother much, he rather becomes indifferent to her. Similarly when this man (soul) gets entangled in worldly pleasures and prosperity, he forgets the Lord who is the enjoyer and the Lord of all sacrifices etc., and thus he has a fall. But when he realizes that God is the real enjoyer of all the things and He is the only Lord, he comes to the right path and does not fall.]

'Aham hi sarvayajñānām * bhoktā ca prabhureva ca'—The Lord is the enjoyer of all the virtuous actions such as sacrifice, charity, penance, pilgrimage etc., which are performed according to the ordinance of the scriptures and according to one's caste and stage (order) of life etc.,

* Though the term 'Yajñānām' used in the plural number includes all actions (duties) yet the term 'Sarva' means to show that no scriptural or physical or practical duty has been excluded.

because all the ordinances have been made only by Him so that beings, remaining detached from actions and their fruits, may not deviate from the self and may worship Him with exclusive devotion. As He is the enjoyer of all sacrifices, He is also the Lord of all the worlds, things, men, incidents, circumstances, actions and beings including their senses, bodies, minds and intellects because the entire universe has emanated from Him and so He is their Lord.

An Important Fact

The Lord is the enjoyer. What does it mean?

The Lord has declared, "A great soul realizes that all this is God" (Gītā 7/19) and "In my view I am being and non-being both" (Gītā 9/19). It means that when a devotee performs virtuous actions such as sacrifice, charity, penance or provides food to the hungry, helps the destitute, waters plants, feeds dogs and sparrows etc., all of them are enjoyed by the Lord because it is He Who has manifested Himself in different forms.* Thus a devotee serves the Lord only, with all these articles offered to the hungry, the needy, and to anyone else in His universal form. The Lord is the enjoyer of all what so ever is offered to Him in diverse forms.

How is He the Lord?

Devotees regard God as the Lord of the higher and the lower Nature. He is the master of the entire universe and so He is free in creating, preserving, destroying, conducting, and enjoying this entire universe and also in bringing about any change in it. Thus He is the Lord.

'Na tu māmabhijānanti tattvenātaś cyavanti te'—In fact the Lord is the real; the unreal; the sentient and the insentient all. So He is the enjoyer and the Lord of all the things etc. But those, who don't know this fact think that if they offer food or water to creatures, it is received by them and so they are the enjoyers. But actually the real enjoyer is the Lord. So without beholding the Lord in different manifestations, they fall. Therefore every person should regard the Lord as the enjoyer. Thus whatever is offered to anyone should be offered only to Him, knowing it to be His.

Secondly all the worldly pleasures and prosperity are the Lord's and are for the service of the Lord Who has manifested Himself in the form of the universe. But people attached to pleasures and properity, by considering them their own, think that they are their master but actually they become slaves to them because by depending on them they regard them as part and parcel of their life while they are different from them. Thus they fall. But if they know the fact that God is the enjoyer and the Lord of all the sacrifices, they are liberated.

'Cyavanti' (Fall) means that without attaining God, they fall. By performing virtuous actions they go to higher regions such as heaven etc., but having enjoyed the heavenly pleasures they have to return to the world of mortals (Gītā 9/21). Thus instead of attaining salvation, they have to follow the wheel of birth and death. This is their fall.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse describes the relative destinies of the different devotees who worship other deites with an interested motive.

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान्पितॄन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः ।
भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम् ॥ २५ ॥

* There is an anecdote. Once the saint named Nāmadeva went for pilgrimage. There he cooked food and went to take clarified-butter. In the mean-while a dog came there and ran with a loaf of bread. Saint Nāmadeva ran after him with clarified-butter-pot and said, "O Lord, I wanted to offer this loaf of bread with clarified-butter to You. Why are You running away?" As soon as He uttered these words, the Lord manifested Himself because in the form of that dog there was no one else besides the Lord. Thus whatever is offered to anyone, is offered only to God.

yānti devavratā devānpitrīnyānti pitṛvratāḥ
bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā yānti madyājino'pi mām

Those who worship the gods with self-interest, go to the gods after death, those who worship the manes reach the manes, those who adore the evil spirits, reach the evil spirits. But those who worship Me attain Me alone. 25

Comment:

[In the preceding verse the Lord declared that He is the enjoyer of all sacrifices and the Lord of the entire universe. But those who instead of regarding Him as the enjoyer and the Lord, themselves become enjoyer and the Lord, fall. Now in this verse He explains how they fall.]

'Yānti devavratā devān'—Those who don't know reality about the Lord but hanker after worldly pleasures and prosperity, worship other gods, following rites relating to them (Gītā 7/20). Those gods carry their devotees to their abode but they have to return from there because all the worlds from the abode of Brahmā downwards are subject to return (Gītā 8/16).

In the twenty-third verse the Lord declares that those devotees who worship other gods, also worship Him alone, though not in accordance with rules. It means that those devotees don't know that all is God. Their aim of worship is to get worldly pleasures and prosperity. So they fall. If they had worshipped either the Lord or even gods without having any desire, they instead of attaining the gods would have attained the Lord. Had they not desired anything from the gods (as manifestation of the Lord) and the Lord and even if the Lord and the gods had offered them, they would have declined the offer. They would have rather responded, "O Lord ! You are ours and we are Yours. Had the worldly things (pleasures and prosperity) been more valuable than this affinity with You, we would have desired or begged of You. But there is nothing more valuable than this affinity. So why should we beg ?" Having such sentiments they would have become a source of bliss to Him and they would have not attained the perishable and paltry celestial world.

'Pitṛīnyānti pitṛvratāḥ'— Those who want their desires to be satisfied, worship the manes by regarding them their favourite deity. But the greatest desire that can be satisfied by the manes is that they can take their devotees to their abode.

'Bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā'— The persons possessing the mode of ignorance (darkness) worship the spirits and ghosts to fulfil their worldly desires. They worship spirits at night on the cremation ground with meat and wine and incantations etc. Their maximum benefit is that those evil spirits can fulfil their worldly desires. But after death they reach the spirits i.e., become evil spirits.

'Yānti madyājino'pi mām'— Those who think of Me and worship Me with exclusive devotion attain Me certainly.

An Important Fact

Those, who worship other gods, manes and spirits etc., for worldly pleasures and prosperity, have to go to hells or to follow the cycle of birth and death in eighty-four lac forms of lives. In human birth by having affinity of love with God, they could be a source of bliss to Him. But being engrossed in mean worldly desires they adore petty gods, manes and evil spirits and get entangled in the vicious circle. Therefore they should devote themselves only to God very cautiously. If they worship the Lord they can attain Him. Or if they worship them regarding them as the manifestation of the Lord without the desire for the fruit of worship, they can attain Him.

Regarding them as separate from the Lord and having a desire for fruit these are the two cases of downfall.

The birth as evil spirits is very filthy and impure and so is their worship. So those who worship spirits have a sure down-fall because they can never behold them as the manifestation of God* nor can serve them without a selfish motive.

There is an anecdote. There was a man who worshipped a female spirit called 'Kaṃa' (she when under the control of some one is said to reveal to him all secrets). When anyone went to him to get the answer of his question, he could know the question and could answer it. Some one wanted to know the secret. He said that he applied stool to his ear and with the help of 'Kaṃa' a female spirit he could know the question and the answer. But at the time of his death he wanted to run to the bank of the river Narmadā so that he could attain salvation. But that female evil spirit presented herself as a female hog and killed him. Thus she took him to her abode. So the worship of spirits is forbidden.

But the strivers can offer oblation of food and water to the evil spirits and ghosts so that they may be liberated from the life of evil spirits. Even saints and great souls have done so.

Link:–An idea may come to the mind of the people that when access even to the minor gods is not easy, access to the Lord should be very difficult. The Lord clarifies the point.

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ २६ ॥

patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyaṁ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tadahaṁ bhaktyupahṛtamaśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ

Whoever offers Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or even water, I accept the pious offering offered by him with love. 26

Comment:

[All the things and actions belong to the lower Nature of the Lord. But a man by identifying himself with them becomes their enjoyer and lord. But actually the Lord is their enjoyer and master. So the Lord orders devotees to offer all the things and actions to Him (9/27). By doing so they will be free from the bondage for ever (9/28).]

Secondly in the worship of the gods several ordinances etc., are to be observed but in attaining Him there are no rules and regulations, because a man (soul) being His portion has natural affinity with him. So he can attain the Lord without any formalities with his firm feeling of affinity with Him in the same way as a child can go to the lap of its mother without any formality.

'Patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyaṁ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati'—The devotee who offers with love a leaf (basil leaf etc.), a flower, a fruit or even water, the Lord appears in person and eats that article offered by him with love. The Lord satisfied the three worlds by demanding a leaf from Draupadi and by eating it. He liberated the elephant who offered Him a flower. He relished the dried fruit offered by Śabarī so much that he could never forget it and always praised her hospitality. When Rantideva offered water to the Lord

* If a devotee regards an evil spirit as the manifestation of God, the evil spirit attains emancipation and the devotee has a vision of God, once the devotee, Nāmadeva saw an evil spirit of a very big size. Nāmadeva prayed to it by regarding it as his favourite deity with the result that the evil spirit attained emancipation and God revealed Himself to him.

Who came as a person of the low-caste, he had His vision.

When a devotee is absorbed in devotion, he forgets what he is offering to the Lord. Similarly the Lord is also so much lost in love that He takes no heed of what He is eating. The Lord ate the rind of the bananas offered by Vidura's wife with love.

'Tadaham bhaktyupahṛtamaśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ'—The Lord not only accepts the offering of the devotees but also eats it. As a flower is to be smelt but the Lord eats it because it is offered by a devotee with love. It means that if a devotee wants to offer food to the Lord, He immediately feels hungry.

'Prayatātmanaḥ' stands for the devotee whose heart remains engrossed in God and who totally depends only on Him. The Lord partakes the articles offered by such a loving devotee.

Here a leaf, a flower, a fruit and water denote all the things. The reason is that a leaf, a flower and a fruit are the effects of the cause water, as all the three are born of water. So all objects (things) of the entire universe are denoted by them as all are the effects of water. So all the things should be offered to the Lord.

In this verse the term 'Bhakti' (Devotion) has been used two times. 'Bhaktyā' shows devotion of the devotee while 'Bhaktyupahṛtam' is the adjective for the thing offered. It means that when a devotee offers a thing with devotion, it becomes a symbol of devotion (love) and so the Lord eats it because He has a craving for love.

In this verse there is significance of devotion (love) rather than of objects as the Lord has a thirst for loving sentiment, not for objects. As a chaste wife and an obedient disciple feel highly delighted by serving the husband and the preceptor respectively, a devotee is very much delighted by offering a thing to the Lord because he feels that the Lord by His special grace has given him an opportunity to serve Him with the thing which is actually His.

The Lord eats the thing offered with devotion. There is an anecdote in this connection. There was a priest who offered almonds, walnuts, cashew nuts and pistachio nuts etc., to the Lord in the temple from the Diwali festival to the Holi festival. But when these nuts became costly, he began to offer ground nuts. One day the priest had a vision of the Lord in his dream. The Lord said, "My dear, you have started to offer only ground nuts." The priest again started to offer almond etc. The priest was convinced that the Lord ate the things offered to Him.

It is said by saints that the things offered to the Lord with devotion, become uncommon in smell, and taste etc., and they are not spoiled with the passage of time. This is not a hard and fast rule. But it depends upon the devotion of the devotee.

When articles are offered as oblation into fire, it is sacrifice; when they are offered to others, it is called charity. When by abstinence they are not used for one's ownself, it becomes austerity; and when they are offered to God, it leads to union with Him—all these are different names of renunciation.

An Important Fact

Link:–A man has a down-fall if he is attached either to things or actions. In the previous verse it was mentioned that the things should be offered to the Lord. In the next verse He explains that the actions should also be offered to the Lord.

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत्।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम्॥ २७॥

yatkaroṣi yadaśnāsi yajjuhoṣi dadāsi yat
yattapasyasi kaunteya tatkuruṣva madarpaṇam

O son of Kuntī, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you bestow as a gift, whatever you do by way of penance, offer it all to Me. 27

Comment:

[It is an ordinance of the Lord that howsoever men approach Him, even so does He seek them (Gītā 4/11). When a devotee offers his things to the Lord, the Lord also offers him His gift. The things offered by the devotee are limited while those offered by the Lord are limitless. If a devotee offers himself to the Lord, the Lord offers Himself to him. Actually the Lord has already offered Himself to the universe (Gītā 9/4) and also has offered freedom to them. So if they offer the freedom bestowed by Him to Him, He will also offer His freedom to them and thus depend on them. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa orders Arjuna to offer that freedom to Him.]

'Yatkaroṣi'—This expression includes all scriptural, physical, practical, social, spiritual and mundane actions. Lord Kṛṣṇa orders Arjuna to offer all actions to Him. If he offers himself to Him all his actions will be spontaneously offered to Him. Now Lord Kṛṣṇa divides those actions into different parts.

'Yadaśnāsi'—This expression includes all the physical actions as taking meals, drinking water, taking medicines, wearing clothes, walking, sleeping, waking, bathing etc.

'Yajjuhoṣi'—This expression includes all the sacrificial actions such as arrangement of material for sacrifice, burning fire, chanting sacred formulas and offering oblation to the sacred fire.

'Dadāsi yat'—This expression includes gift, presents and help he offers to others.

'Yattapasyasi'—It includes all actions that a devotee performs by way of penance: such as control over sense-organs, discharging duty, facing the unfavourable and favourable circumstances happily, pilgrimage, fasting, adoration, meditation, loud chanting and trance etc.

'Tatkuruṣva madarpaṇam'— It means that by offering every action to the Lord, the devotee becomes free from the feeling of 'I'ness and 'Mineness' which binds him, and he attains perfection, having attained which he does not reckon any other gain greater than that and established in which he is not moved even by great sorrow and which is free from the contact of pain (Gītā 6/22-23).

In this verse 'Yat' (whatever) has been used five times which means that offer of each of the actions is of great merit. But how meritorious it will be, if all the actions are offered to Him.

An Important Fact

In the twenty-sixth verse Lord Kṛṣṇa said that a devotee should offer a leaf, a flower or even water to Him. All these things are easily available but they require a little effort. In the twenty-seventh verse He said that whatever action a devotee performs, he should offer it to God. It means that there is nothing new whether an article or action should be offered to God. But a devotee should offer himself to God. By doing so all his actions will be automatically offered to the Lord. As a mother is pleased with different actions such as jumping, running, playing, smiling etc., of a child, the Lord is pleased with the different actions of a devotee because he becomes His.

But it does not mean that forbidden actions are to be offered to the Lord. The Lord is offered only the things and actions that are sanctioned by the scriptures. As a thing which suits a saint is given to him, the thing or action which suits the Lord is offered to Him.

Now if anyone offers forbidden actions such as theft etc., to the Lord, according to the ordinance, he will get its many fold fruit i.e., he will be severely punished.

Link:–In the previous two verses the Lord said that a devotee should offer all things and actions to Him. In the next verse He describes the good that accrues from offering everything and every action to Him.

शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्ष्यसे कर्मबन्धनैः ।
संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥ २८ ॥

śubhāśubhaphalairevaṁ mokṣyase karmabandhanaiḥ
saṁnyāsayogayuktātmā vimukto māmupaiṣyasi

With your mind firmly set in the Yoga of renunciation i.e., by offering all actions to Me, you will be free from the bondage of actions yielding good and bad results; and freed from them, you shall attain Me. 28

Comment:

'Śubhāśubhaphalairevaṁ mokṣyase karmabandhanaiḥ'—By offering all things and actions i.e., by offering himself, a devotee becomes free from good and bad results of actions performed in innumerable births. In human life such a man does not perform evil actions. All his actions are performed in accordance with the ordinance of the scriptures and saints. But by chance if a forbidden action is performed by him, the Lord who is installed in his heart, destroys it.

All the actions performed with body, mind, intellect and senses etc., are external and so their good or bad result in the form of favourable or unfavourable circumstances is also external. But a man by error accepts his affinity with those circumstances and thus feels happy and sad. This feeling of sadness and happiness is the bondage which leads him to the wheel of birth and death. On the other hand a devotee in all the favourable and unfavourable circumstances, regarding them as God's will, feels God's grace and becomes free from bondage.

'Saṁnyāsayogayuktātmā'—It means that a devotee should offer all his actions to God. Here 'Saṁnyāsa' does not stand for the Discipline of Knowledge. Here it means surrender to God as is mentioned in 18/57 also.

As a Sāṅkhyayogī rests happily in the self or in God, mentally relegating all actions to the body with nine holes (Gītā 5/13) a devotee offers all his actions of innumerable births and their fruits to God.

'Vimukto māmupaiṣyasi'— A devotee after becoming free from the bondage attains God.

An Important Fact

What is the bondage of good* and evil actions?

Every action whether good or evil has a beginning and an end. Similarly there is connection and disconnection of circumstances as the fruit of actions. It means that if an action and its fruit are transitory, how can affinity with them be lasting ? But when he (the eternal self) assumes his affinity with actions, he is connected with their fruits. Though his affinity with actions and their fruits is not possible, yet he assumes this affinity. He (self) is eternal. So his assumed affinity which he accepts in himself also appears to be eternal.

He feels happy when good actions bear fruit in the form of favourable circumstances. But this happiness does not persist for a long time. So he has a desire for happiness. This desire is the root of sadness. Before happiness there was sadness and again it will end in sadness. It means that so long as he has a desire for happiness, he can't escape sadness.

When he surrenders himself to God, he realizes his real identity with God (because he

* As evil actions lead to bondage, so do good actions lead to bondage. As shackles whether of gold or iron bind a man, so do both virtuous and evil actions lead to bondage as they conduce a man to rebirth.

is a portion of the Lord) and his assumed affinity with the body perishes. Actually he already had his identity with God but he didn't realize it because he performed actions with a selfish motive. But when he offers actions as well as himself to God, he attains His love naturally. In that state he feels the Lord's grace in both the favourable and the unfavourable circumstances. As a kind mother shows her kindness in rearing as well as in scolding a child so does the Lord by sending the favourable and the unfavourable circumstances shower His grace on devotees. A devotee without paying any heed to the favourable and unfavourable circumstance meditates only on God.

Link:–Now a doubt arises that the Lord frees those from the bondage, who surrender themselves to Him, it means that he does not free others and so He is not gracious and equanimous to all. The Lord clarifies the point.

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥ २९ ॥

samo'haṁ sarvabhūteṣu na me dveṣyo'sti na priyaḥ
ye bhajanti tu māṁ bhaktyā mayi te teṣu cāpyaham

I am the same to all beings; to Me there is none hateful, none dear. But those who worship Me with devotion are in Me and I am also in them.* 29

Comment:

'Samo'haṁ sarvabhūteṣu'—The Lord pervades the whole universe (Gītā 9/4) and He is the disinterested friend of all beings (Gītā 5/29).

The Lord pervades everywhere equally from a small ant to a big elephant and from the vilest sinner to the most virtuous saint, because all beings (souls) are His fragments and His own self. So they can't be separated from Him and He can't be separated from them. The beings can be different by birth, by actions, by circumstances, by incidents and by union and disunion etc., but He ever and equally pervades all of Them.

'Na me dveṣyo'sti na priyaḥ†—The Lord has neither attachment to the virtuous persons, nor aversion to the evil ones. He loves all the beings equally. But the virtuous people desiring fruits for their virtuous actions go to higher regions while the evil-doers go to hell and eighty-four lac form of lives.

The Lord provides earth, water, fire, air and ether equally to all the beings because they are His portion. As a man has neither attachment to the healthy limb nor aversion to the diseased one, the Lord has neither attachment to the virtuous persons who follow His precepts nor aversion to the evil-doers and His critics because He is the same to all beings. He has no partiality. It is partiality from which attachment and aversion evolve.

'Ye bhajanti tu māṁ bhaktyā mayi te teṣu cāpyaham'—Those who worship the Lord with devotion without

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* In the first part of this verse there is the description of all beings while in the second part of those who worship the Lord.

† Here the term 'Priyaḥ' stands for attachment not for loving because all beings are loving to the Lord as they are born of Him (Mānasa 7/85/2). The Lord always emphasizes the fact that one should be free from attachment and aversion. So here the term has been used for attachment.

having any attachment for the world and work to please Him are in Him and He is in them (Gītā 9/14; 10/9).

It does not mean that other beings are not in Him but it means that they don't accept this fact, they think that they are worldly and so they remain established in the world and the body which are transitory. But those, who regard the Lord as pervading everywhere, all the time, all things, incidents, circumstances and beings, are specially in Him and He is specially in them.

Secondly those who have this affinity that they are the Lord's and He is theirs, they become so much intimate that they become one. So they are in Him and He is in them.

Thirdly their 'I'ness comes to an end. So they dwell in Him.

Now a question arises that it means the Lord is not the same for all beings. He loves His devotees more than He loves other beings. So He is not just. The answer is that the Lord has declared, "Howsoever men approach Me, even so do I seek them" (Gītā 4/11). Therefore though the Lord is the same and just for all beings yet it is devotion of devotees which attracts the Lord towards them. If He is not attracted towards them, it means that He is ungrateful and unjust.

As a son is called worthy or unworthy because of his virtuous and evil actions, as a louse like insect sucks blood instead of milk from the udders of a cow and as with the same electricity in a refrigerator water is frozen to ice while in a heater fire is burnt because of their characteristics. Similarly different persons because of their different characteristics, have different grasping capacity to receive His grace. As a good conductor of heat or electricity conducts heat or electricity but some other substances don't conduct at all. The defect does not lie with the source of energy but it is the defect of the instrument. Similarly God's grace or His sameness is equal to all. But the evil doers because of their ignorance don't realize His grace and sameness. The Lord's grace manifests itself among His devotees according to their devotion while it is not revealed among those who have no devotion and who are non-believers.

It means that men because of their worldly attachment think that they are worldly. If they start worshipping the Lord, their attachment is wiped out and they start feeling that they are in God and God is in them. Actually they are ever in God and God is ever in them but the reality is veiled by attachment.

The Lord has used the term 'Ye' (who) which means that whosoever worships Him with devotion is in Him and He is in His devotee; he may be of any caste, creed, colour and country etc.

Link:–Now in the next verse the Lord expounds the greatness of devotion and devotees.

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥ ३० ॥

api cetsudurācāro bhajate māmananyabhāk
sādhureva sa mantavyaḥ samyagvyavasito hi saḥ

Even if the vilest sinner worships Me with exclusive devotion, he should be considered a saint, for he has rightly resolved. 30

Comment:

[If a multi-millionaire says that he'll help anyone, even his enemy with money, his charity will be testified when he actually helps the man who is his enemy. To prove the veracity of His statement here the Lord first mentions the vilest sinner.]

'Api cet'—In the seventh chapter the Lord declares, "Evil-doers don't worship Me" (7/15) but here He declares, "The vilest

sinners worship Me". There seems to be a contradiction in these two statements. To remove this doubt the Lord has used the terms 'Api cet' (even if). It means that in the seventh chapter the Lord has described their evil nature. Swayed by that nature they don't take refuge in God. But it does not mean that there is any restriction imposed by the Lord for the sinners that they should not worship Him. If they want to worship Him, they can. The Lord has no ill will against any being.

'Sudurācāro bhajate mām ananyabhāk'—Even the sinners of the most sinful conduct, by worshipping the Lord with exclusive devotion, attain salvation. Even at present sins may be committed sometimes by them because of their past influences. But they are firmly determined with exclusive devotion to attain the Lord. Now they don't aim at riches, honour, respect, happiness and comforts etc. Their only aim is exclusive devotion.

Now a question arises how the vilest sinner can worship the Lord. The answer is that there can be several reasons:

(i) When in adversity he gets no worldly support from any quarter, he surrenders himself to the Lord.

(ii) The atmosphere and the company of saints converts him.

(iii) Any past virtuous influence may be aroused some how or the other as was aroused in Bālmīki, Ajāmila and Sadana the butcher etc., who were converted into devotees though they were sinners.

(iv) If a person escapes some mortal danger somehow or the other, he may start believing in the Lord's singular power.

(v) By beholding the saints and by the grace of the saints, like Vālmīki and Ajāmila he may start worshipping the Lord.

Several thieves, robbers, murderers and other vilest sinners became devout devotees of the Lord.

Now a doubt arises how the vilest sinner can worship the Lord continuously, when even the devotees who have been engaged in the worship of God for several years, can't worship continuously. Here importance has been attached to exclusive and undivided devotion rather than continuous devotion. As a chaste wife has her relationship only with her husband, that sinner has his affinity only with God.

'Ananyabhāk'—A person can have exclusive devotion by admitting his relationship with the Lord i.e., by changing his egoism. He should admit that He is the Lord's and the Lord is his. He is more purified by changing his egoism than by performing action such as sacrifice, charity, penance and chanting the name etc.

There are three factors in connection with the changing egoism:—

(i) To root it out:— A devotee following the Discipline of Knowledge realizes that his self is different from egoism and so he remains established in the self. Thus his ego is rooted out.

(ii) To purify it:— By following the Discipline of Action a devotee discharges his duty for others without expecting any fruit for his duty. For example a son should discharge his duty towards his father without bothering whether the father treats him as a son or not, whether he troubles him. He should discharge his duty under all circumstances without laying any claim on him. He should not expect his father to be favourable to him. He should cherish no desire for his own comfort or gain. Thus having no desire of his own, his egoism is purified.

(iii) To change it:—In the Discipline of Devotion ego is changed. For example—a chaste wife by changing her ego becomes only of her husband. She regards her husband's house as hers, his Gotra as hers and she does not regard her relation with parents, in-laws and children. But she does serve all of them for the sake of her husband. Similarly the ego of a devotee changes. By following the Discipline of Devotion just like a chaste wife, who becomes only her husband's, a devotee becomes God's and only God becomes his. Thus he changes his egoism. This change of egoism is here denoted by the expression 'Ananyabhāk'.

'Sādhureva sa mantavyaḥ'—He should be considered a saint. This is the Lord's special behest. Though he does not possess all the virtues of a saint, yet he should be regarded as a saint because he has admitted that he is only God's and only God is his. Thus by changing his egoism he will become a saint in no time.

Now the question arises why the Lord has to say that he should be considered a saint. The answer is that generally people judge a man by his actions. Where saintliness is not manifest and some trace of bad conduct is observed, there only it is said that he should be considered a saint. With change of ego he has accepted himself as God's. Therefore his feelings and conduct will become pure in no time. So the Lord says that such a person should be considered a saint.

A man is a devout devotee. But if any day he is seen with a prostitute, people regard him as immoral, though he may have gone there to reform her. Similarly a sinner may be regarded religious minded and virtuous if he is seen by people counting the beads of a rosary on the bank of the Ganges. The worldly people generally view actions of other people. But the Lord instead of paying heed to their actions, pay attention to their feelings.

'Samyagvyavasito hi saḥ'—In the second chapter of the Gītā in connection with the Discipline of Action the Lord says that in this path the intellect is determinate while here He says that he himself has rightly resolved. There the determination is by intellect while here he himself is determined. Whatever is determined by one self is permanent while that what is determined by intellect is shortlived because his intellect can be attracted towards worldly pleasures etc., when he does not live in the spiritual atmosphere as that of listening to divine discourses or studying the scriptures.

As a girl after her marriage changes her egoism and becomes her husband's and she even without making any effort always remembers that she is her husband's, a devotee after becoming the Lord's once, becomes His for ever because he has rightly resolved. So the Lord says that he should be considered a saint. By doing so he speedily becomes virtuous (Gītā 9/31).

A person may possess evils and sins so long as he has a disinclination for the Lord. But when he has an inclination for the Lord by having exclusive devotion to Him, all his evils and sins are rooted out.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord declares the result of right resolution.

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।
कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥ ३१ ॥

kṣipraṁ bhavati dharmātmā śaśvacchāntiṁ nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati

Speedily he becomes virtuous and secures lasting peace. O Kaunteya, you vow for certain that My devotee never falls. 31

Comment:

'Kṣipraṁ bhavati dharmātmā'—Speedily he becomes virtuous and pure because being a portion of the Lord he is virtuous but having his affinity with the world he became a sinner which was a transitory phase of his life. As soon as he changes his egoism and becomes God's, his affinity with the world is wiped out and he realizes that he is virtuous, because all the evils are the product of attaching importance to the world. But as soon as a striver attaches importance only to God, rather than to the world, he becomes virutous. So long as he has sinful feelings, he can't resolve that he is God's—this is correct. But it doesn't mean

that a past sinner can't thus resolve. Being a fragment of God he is ever sinless. But due to his attachment to the world sins visit him. In case he starts hating sins and resolves that he has to adore God only, he can be instantly virtuous. In ego where there is desire for the world there is inclination to God also. If this inclination to God is strengthened, the desire for the world is wiped out and God-Realization takes no time.

A Vital Fact

This is a rule that if a man changes his egoism, his actions are automatically changed. If a man by performing virtuous actions wants to be virtuous, it will take a long time. But if he changes his egoism he will become virtuous and his actions will change automatically. Similarly if a sinner changes his egoism and admits that he is God's and God is his, he speedily becomes virtuous. It means that when the man desires worldly pleasures by having affinity of 'I'ness and 'Mineness' with the body and the world, he becomes full of desires (Gītā 2/43) but when by renouncing his affinity with the world, he realizes his real affinity with the Lord, he becomes virtuous.

Generally people have a conception that a man becomes truthful by speaking the truth and a thief by committing theft. But this is not a fact. When a man accepts himself truthful, then he always speaks the truth, and by speaking the truth, his spirit of truthfulness is strengthened. Similar is the case with a thief. It proves that as is the doer, so are his activities and his activities strengthen his assumption "I am truthful or I am a thief."

It means that as a person is, so are his actions. When even a sinner becomes God's, not worldly, his actions are virtuous.

'Śaśvacchāntiṁ nigacchati'—One who through spiritual activities tries to become virtuous, can acquire enjoyments and prosperity due to his latent desire for these objects. But he can't attain even lasting peace. When the vilest sinner changes his egoism and becomes the Lord's, he can't have desires and can't attach importance to the unreal. So he attains lasting peace.

Secondly being a portion of the Lord he possesses lasting peace but by having his affinity with the world he can't realize that lasting peace. But by having his affinity with the Lord he realizes that lasting peace.

'Kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati'—Here the Lord asks Arjuna to promise; He Himself does not promise. The reason is that the promise of the Lord can be broken but the promise made by the devotee is maintained by the Lord. As Lord Kṛṣṇa's oath of not holding a weapon is broken by Him because His devotee, Bhīṣma swears that he will force Him to hold the weapon.

The Lord declares, "My devotee never falls". By this declaration He means to say that when a person has total inclination to God, he has not the least possibility to fall. The reason is that it was his assumed affinity with the body which led him to a fall. When he having renounced this affinity has an exclusive inclination to God, how can there be any possibility of his fall?

Now a doubt arises that when even the vilest sinner can become virtuous, a virtuous person can also become a vile sinner again. But Lord Kṛṣṇa declares that a devotee can never fall i.e., he can't become a sinner again. It shows that the Lord is not only just but also gracious. It is His grace which enables a devotee never to fall.

Link:–In this context Lord Kṛṣṇa explains seven kinds of persons who deserve devotion to the Lord. Out of them the sinner has been explained in the preceding two verses. Now in the next verse He explains the other four kinds of people. The remaining two kinds will be explained in the thirty-third verse.

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥ ३२ ॥

māṁ hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye'pi syuḥ pāpayonayaḥ
striyo vaiśyāstathā śūdrāste'pi yānti parāṁ gatim

O Pārtha, woman-folk, Vaiśyas, Śūdras and even those that are born of the womb of sin (such as the pariah) taking refuge in Me attain the Supreme God. 32

Comment:

'Māṁ hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye'pi syuḥ pāpayonayaḥ striyo vaiśyās-tathā śūdrāste'pi yānti parāṁ gatim'—The Lord has called the man, who has been immoral in this human birth a sinner (9/30). But 'Pāpayonayaḥ' (Born of the womb of sin) are those who were sinners in the previous birth and are born of the sinful wombs as the fruit of their previous actions. This sinful-womb is a very wide term which includes demons, devils, animals, and birds etc.* Sage Śāṇḍilya declares, "As men deserve virtues such as kindness, forgiveness, generosity etc., the beings from the lowest womb to the highest womb deserve devotion to the Lord" (Bhaktisūtra) because all of them, being the portion of the Lord, are His and so they are free to have an inclination for Him. Therefore even those who are born of the womb of sin by taking refuge in Him attain Him.

Actually a man becomes impure by having a disinclination for the Lord. As coal loses its lustre and becomes black after leaving fire and brightens again in the fire, the soul being a portion of the Lord becomes impure by losing its lustre because of its separation from the Lord but when it has inclination for the Lord, its impurity is wiped out and it becomes so pure that the Lord makes him (soul) the jewel of His crown.

Capability and incapability are judged in worldly life. But in having affinity with God they are not essential. Only he who desires Him from his heart, is the most capable as for as the Lord is concerned. For instance a child of a mother renders her good, the mother loves it. Another child does nothing but it wails and invokes the mother's help, feeling afflicted. The mother does not care that it does nothing, how she should take it on her lap. She can't bear its affliction. Her heart melts. She puts it on her lap without caring for its purity or impurity. Similarly when a sinful man possessing the worst conduct being afflicted wails and invokes God, God's heart melts and He accepts him as His and loves him without paying attention to his sinful conduct. It proves that the present sins of the person who becomes a devotee are not obstacles to God-Realization. Then how can the sins of previous birth be obstacle because they can bear fruit in the form of birth in low wombs and unfavourable circumstances? Only they can't create an obstacle in adoration to God.

By the term woman-folk He means that women of all castes, creeds, colours, classes, countries etc., by taking refuge in Him, become pure and attain Him. Devahūti, Śabarī, Kuntī, Draupadī, Vraja's cowherdesses of the past and Mīrā, Karamaitī, Karamābāī, Phūlībāī of the present are the women-devotees. Similarly Samādhi and Tulādhāra among Vaiśyas and Vidura, Sañjaya and Niṣādarāja Guha among Śūdras are examples of devotees.

An Exceptional Fact

The term 'Pāpayonayaḥ' (Born of the womb of sin) is not an adjective qualifying

* Cowherdesses, cows, trees, animals, snakes and other foolish creatures by having exclusive devotion suddenly attained Me. (Śrīmadbhā. 11/12/8)

woman-folk, Vaiśyas and Śūdras. If it qualifies woman-folk, it is unjustified because women of the three castes Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya are authorized to perform Vedic actions such as oblation etc., with their husbands.

The Lord has mentioned woman-folk separately besides the four castes. It means that they independently also, by taking refuge in Him, can attain Him. So they should take refuge only in Him without seeking help of any individual.

If it qualifies Vaiśyas, it is also unjustified because they are fully authorized to study the Vedas and perform Vedic actions such as oblation etc.*

If it qualifies Śūdras, it is also not reasonable because they are included among the people of the four castes. So only people of inferior birth such as Yavana, Hūṇa and Khasa etc., should be included among those born of the womb of sin. There is no restriction for any being to have an inclination to Him because he is an integral part of Him. Moreover animals, birds, trees and plants etc., can also be included among those, because they have no discrimination to move towards Him. But if because of the past influence or any other reason they have an inclination for Him, they can become devotees, like 'Gajendra' the elephant and 'Jaṭāyu', the bird.

A Vital Fact

Feelings play a more important role than birth in the field of spritualism. A man born in a high family or caste may be proud of his birth because of his affinity with the body. But actually he, being a portion of the Lord, is His and is different from the body. So when he renounces his affinity with the body, he becomes one with Him or attains Him. Similarly the 'Jīva' is not converted into Brahma. But Brahma Himself realizes Brahma. In Brahma there is never such assumption—"I am the embodied soul," while the embodied soul is not Brahma. Due to affinity with the vital force, a being is called a 'Jīva'. In Brahma there is no such vital force. Therefore Brahma realizes Brahma. It means 'I am limited'—this feeling being destroyed Brahma is realized.

A man is different from the body. So long as he identifies himself with the body, he remains as slave to this body which is an instrument made of flesh and bones to produce excrement and urine. This identification with the body is the result of the lack of discrimination. Without discrimination a man can follow neither the Discipline of Devotion nor that of Action. So a devotee who wants to attain devotion or salvation should have a clear conception that he is different from the body. He has identity with the Lord while the body has its identity with the world. So long as he identifies himself with the body, he does not deserve either devotion or knowledge. A devotee through devotion remains engrossed in the Lord and so automatically he has no identity with the body and thus sex, caste, creed and colour etc., don't remain obstacles to God-Realization. Similarly a person following the Discipline of Knowledge by applying his discrimination realizes that he is different from the body and thus he also attains the Lord and any distinction of caste, creed, colour, class and country etc., does not debar a devotee from realizing God.

Link:–Now in the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa describes the two kinds of persons who are fully qualified to attain Him.

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* Those possessing good conduct are born as Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas but those of bad conduct are born of the wombs of bitches, pigs and pariahs.

किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणाः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा ।
अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ॥ ३३ ॥

kiṁ punarbrāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā bhaktā rājarṣayastathā
anityamasukhaṁ lokamimaṁ prāpya bhajasva mām

What wonder then that the holy Brāhmaṇas and devout royal saints should attain Him. Therefore, having obtained this transient and joyless body, do worship Me. 33

Comment:

'Kiṁ punarbrāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā bhaktā rājarṣayastathā'—When even the vilest sinners and beings born of the womb of sin as well as woman-folk, Vaiśyas and Śūdras by taking refuge in Him, attain Him, what wonder then that the holy Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas by taking refuge in Him should attain Him i.e., they will attain Him certainly.

The term 'Puṇya' (holy) used here is antonym to the term 'Durācārī (sinner) used in the thirtieth verse while the term 'Brāhmāṇāḥ' is antonym to the term 'Pāpayonayaḥ' used in the thirty-second verse. It means that Brāhmaṇas are holy both by actions and birth. Similarly for the Kṣatriyas the terms 'Ṛṣi' (Saint) and 'Rāja' (Royal) have been used to denote their purity of birth and actions.

The Term 'Bhaktāḥ' has been used to emphasize the fact that those Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas having a virtuous conduct in the previous birth as well as in this birth through devotion attain Him without any doubt. Moreover 'Puṇyā brāhmaṇāḥ' and 'Rajarṣayaḥ' — these two terms denote external purity of actions and birth while 'Bhaktāḥ' denotes internal purity because a devotee takes refuge in the Lord from his heart.

'Anityamasukhaṁ lokamimaṁ prāpya bhajasva mām'—This human birth, is the last of all births, because it can destroy all the innumerable future births. A man can be a source of bliss to the Lord Himself by being an ardent devotee. This birth is sacred but is transient. The body may die any moment. So a man should attain salvation as soon as possible. This body is joyless, there is no joy in it. In the fifteenth verse of the eighth chapter it has been called the 'abode of pain'. Therefore a man should not hanker after worldly pleasures during this human life and waste his precious time.

Here the expression 'Imaṁ lokam' stands for the human body whose only aim is God-Realization because according to the ordinance of the Lord this is the last of all births. If in this life he does not attain God, he misses the golden opportunity which will not be available to him in other species. So He advises men to worship Him without aiming at the perishable objects and without attaching value to them. The Lord's exhorting a devotee to worship Him doesn't mean that this worship will be of any benefit to the Lord, it will benefit the devotee only.

A Vital Fact

The man (soul) being a portion of the Lord is pure, sentient and imperishable. Then by having affinity with transient evils, how can he be sinful and how can the Lord regard Him as sinful ? Being attached to the transient body and the world he gets engaged in evils and sins. So as soon as he renounces that affinity of 'I'ness and 'Mineness' with the body and the world, he comes to know that he is pure. Similarly animals, birds and pariah etc., born of the womb of sin are becoming free from the sinful actions performed in the previous birth. So they by taking refuge in the Lord can also attain Him. Thus the Lord has described sinners of this birth and of the previous birth.

Then the Lord describes those who are mediocre. First He talks about the women,

including those of Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas. Then He talks about the twice-born viz., Vaiśyas who are not so virtuous as Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas. Then He describes Śūdras who are inferior to the twice-born viz., Vaiśyas. So He declares that even women, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras taking refuge in Him, attain Him. So there is no wonder that those Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas, who are holy by birth and actions, should attain Him.

The Lord here (9/30-33) has mentioned seven kinds of persons who deserve devotion to God. They are the vilest sinners, those born of the womb of sin, woman folk, Vaiśyas, Śūdras, Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas. Lord Kṛṣṇa should have described the holy Brāhmaṇa or Kṣatriya first. But first of all He mentions the vilest sinner. The reason is that the lower a person is, the more loving he is to the Lord because he is not proud of his virtues. He naturally considers himself lower and inferior. So the Lord names him first. In the twelfth chapter also He declares that the devotees who have attained perfection are dear to Him while the strivers are extremely dear to Him (Gītā 12/13-20).

Here a point needs attention that the Lord has divided persons into seven kinds according to their caste (Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra); conduct (vilest sinner and that born of the womb of sin) and sex (woman-folk) to emphasize the fact that beings belonging to any caste, having any sort of conduct and of any sex by worshipping God can attain Him because they are all fragments of God. They have become extra-ordinary not because of their caste, conduct and sex but because of their devotion to the Lord.

In the seventh chapter the Lord has divided devotees into four groups and here He has divided them into seven groups according to their caste, conduct and sex in order to explain that all sorts of devotees without any distinction of caste, creed, conduct and sex etc., are deserving of God-Realization. So no one should lose heart as far as devotion and God-Realization are concerned. They themselves have a disinclination for Him. So they themselves can be inclined to Him. They are free and capable in doing so.

Link:–Lord Kṛṣṇa from the twenty-ninth to the thirty-third verses has described devotion and worship. How to worship Him, is made clear in the next verse.

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥ ३४ ॥

manmanā bhava madbhakto madyājī mām namaskuru
māmevaiṣyasi yuktvaivamātmānam matparāyaṇaḥ

Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, adore Me, bow down to Me, thus making yourself steadfast in Me and entirely depending on Me, you will, come to Me. 34

Comment:

[The Lord discloses His secret before His devotee Arjuna who is devoid of the carping spirit and who has devotion to Him.]

'Madbhaktaḥ'—Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to be devoted to Him. He should realize his real relationship with Him that he is His and He is his. He should renounce the assumed relationship that he belongs to a particular caste, creed and country etc.

'Manmanā bhava'—The mind is fixed on the person or object that a person loves and likes. So Lord Kṛṣṇa reminds Arjuna that his affinity with Him is eternal because he is His portion. The Lord can't forget this affinity but Arjuna can forget it. So He exhorts him to fix his mind on Him, by loving and liking Him.

'Madyājī'—The Lord asks him to perform all actions such as eating, drinking, sleeping, moving and his profession etc., as adoration to Him.

'Mām namaskuru'—Howsoever agreeable or disagreeable an incident may happen to a devotee and he may be aware of it through senses, but to him in reality it is divine grace only. If something very unfavourable happens, the devotee should regard it as a special divine grace as it is not according to the devotee's own will, but it is according to the Lord's own sweet will. If something favourable happens, in what proportion the devotee's consent is there in its happening. In that proportion the divine grace is lesser. But in unfavourable incident the devotee should feel highly blissful as it is destined purely by God. It means that a devotee should bow down to Him and His will. He should remain satisfied and happy in favourable and unfavourable circumstances by regarding them as the Lord's gift because He is all merciful and is the disinterested friend of all beings. Nothing can happen against His will.

A devotee surrenders himself to the Lord without having any desire of his own and always remains satisfied with what the Lord does; and he says to the Lord, "O Lord! In which births, in what circumstances, whatever actions helplessly I have done; to neutralize those actions and make me pure, whatever dispensation you are making, I should accept them with much pleasure because they are conducive to my salvation. Why should I brood over them?" Thus he thinks that whatever is done by Him is for his welfare.

'Māmevaiṣyasi yuktvaivamātmānam matparāyaṇaḥ'—The term 'Madbhaktaḥ' signifies self surrender, the term 'Manmanā' signifies surrender of the inner sense and 'Madyājī' signifies that all his activities become worship-material. The experession 'Mām namaskuru' signifies surrender of the body in the Lord's feet. It means that a devotee, by surrendering his actions, things, body, mind and himself to the Lord, attains Him.

The expression 'Yuktvaivamātmānam' means that a devotee by changing his egoism, that he is only the Lord's, surrenders himself to the Lord. In that case all the actions performed with senses, mind and intellect etc., will be diverted towards Him and he will desire nothing else besides the Lord. By doing so he will attain God without any doubt.

The term 'Matparāyaṇaḥ' means that he should become a puppet in the hands of the Lord by wholly depending on Him. He should have, not even a trace of thought to do anything against the Lord's will.

An Important Fact

(1)

A devotee, by fixing his mind on Him, by being devoted to Him, by adoring Him and by bowing down to Him, surrenders himself to Him. Out of these four factors the most important is that he becomes a devotee to the Lord and then all the perishable worldly things to which he was attached become His. Thus a devotee should admit the reality that he is only the Lord's. Thus his mineness is gone. This notion of mineness was wrong. It is wiped out.

(2)

A man, by identifying himself with the body and the world, can't know reality about them. If he as a spectator, by isolating himself from them, beholds them, he comes to know the reality that he as a portion of the Lord is eternal while they are perishable. But those who surrender themselves to God and become one with Him without having any separate entity of their own, know the Lord. In them not only 'I'ness and 'mineness' are gone but also there should not be even their trace.

When a man identifies himself with the body, he feels the pleasure and pain of the body as his own and can't realize that he is different from the body. Similarly when a man realizes that being a portion of the Lord, he is one with Him, he is not at all affected with any change which happens

either in the body or the world. His actions are automatically performed by God's will. He becomes one with the Lord. As Rādhājī is one with Lord Kṛṣṇa, both of them are one and the same but to exchange love, the Lord has manifested Himself in two forms. This is His sport of union and disunion. In their union there is the feeling of disunion and in their disunion there is the feeling to be united. Thus union and disunion strengthen each other and in this process there is enhancement of spiritual love which can't be expressed in words. This state of enhancement of indescribable spiritual love is God-Realization.

Harmony of the Topic in the Seventh & the Ninth Chapters–

At the beginning of the seventh chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa declared that He would teach Arjuna knowledge (wisdom) with Realization (Real knowledge of manifest Divinity) (7/2). The flow of the Lord's gospel was interrupted when Arjuna put questions at the beginning of the eighth chapter. So when the eighth chapter was over, Lord Kṛṣṇa at the beginning of the ninth chapter started the same topic of the seventh chapter Himself by declaring, "To you who do not cavil, I shall now unfold the most profound Knowledge with Realization" (Gītā 9/1). The topic which was explained in thirty verses in the seventh chapter continued in thirty-four verses of the ninth chapter and first eleven verses of the tenth chapter. Arjuna was very much influenced by Lord Kṛṣṇa's gospel and so he mentions the Lord's glories from the twelfth to the eighteenth verses of the tenth chapter. It means that the topic mentioned in the seventh chapter has also been explained in the ninth chapter.

The topic which was explained in the first verse of the seventh chapter by the terms 'With the mind attached to Me' in brief has been explained in detail in the thirty-fourth verse of the ninth chapter by the terms 'Fix your mind on Me' etc.

In the second verse of the seventh chapter the Lord declared, "I shall unfold to you in full this knowledge combined with realization, having known which nothing else remains to be known." The same statement has been made by Him in the first verse of the ninth chapter when He declares, "I shall unfold this knowledge with realization by knowing which you will be released from evil." By being released from evil, nothing remains to be known. Thus the Lord unfolded the knowledge with realization and its fruit.

In the third verse of the seventh chapter the Lord declared, "Among thousands of men scarcely one strives for perfection and of those who strive, scarcely one knows Me in truth." Why does scarcely one know Him in truth? The answer comes in the third verse of the ninth chapter, "Men having no faith in Dharma (Knowledge with Realization), failing to reach Me, revolve in the path of the mortal world."

In the sixth verse of the seventh chapter and in the eighteenth verse of the ninth chapter He declared,"I am the origin and the dissolution of the eintire world."

In the tenth verse of the seventh chapter He declared,"I am the eternal seed of all beings." In the eighteenth verse of the ninth chapter He declared,"I am the imperishable seed."

In the twelfth verse of the seventh chapter by declaring, "Neither I exist in them nor do they exist in Me" the Lord described in brief the sovereign science which has been described in detail in the fourth and fifth verses of the ninth chapter.

In the thirteenth verse of the seventh chapter the Lord declared the whole of the creation to be deluded by objects evolved from the three modes of Nature while in the eighth verse of the ninth chapter He declared the whole multitude of beings helpless under the regime of Nature.

In the fourteenth verse of the seventh chapter the Lord declared, "Those who take refuge in Me alone, cross this divine illusion of Mine." In the twenty-second verse of the ninth chapter He declared, "Those who worship Me alone, thinking of no one else, who are ever devout, I provide gain and security."

In the fifteenth verse of the seventh chapter He declared," The evil doers, the deluded do not worship Me", while in the eleventh verse of the ninth chapter He declared, "Fools do not know My supreme nature."

Again in the fifteenth verse of the seventh chapter He declared, "They have embraced the demoniac nature" while in the twelfth verse of the ninth chapter He declared, "Those senseless persons have embraced a demoniacal nature."

What in the sixteenth verse of the seventh chapter has been called 'virtuous' the same in the thirteenth verse of the ninth chapter has been called 'great soul'.

In the seventh chapter from the sixteenth to the eighteenth verses there is the description of four types of virtuous men while in the ninth chapter from the thirtieth to the thirty-third verse there is description of seven types of devotees according to their caste, conduct and sex.

In the nineteenth verse of the seventh chapter He declared, "The man of realization realizes that all this is God," while in the nineteenth verse of the ninth chapter He declared,"I am being and non-being both."

A devotee having a disinclination for the Lord worships the gods either because he wants his desires to be fulfilled by them or he does not know the Lord in reality. In the twentieth verse of the seventh chapter there is the description of those whose discrimination has been carried away by various desires and so they worship other gods while in the twenty-third verse of the ninth chapter there is the description of those who worship other gods because they don't recognize (know) the Lord in reality.

In the twenty-third verse of the seventh chapter there is the description of those who by worshipping other gods craving for some worldly fruit, gain perishable fruit while in the twenty-first verse of the ninth chapter there is the description of those who as a result of their deeds enjoy the celestial pleasures in heaven and then return to this world of mortals when their merits are exhausted.

In the twenty-third verse of the seventh chapter the Lord declared, "The worshippers of gods attain the gods, whereas My devotees attain Me alone." The same fact has been pointed out in the twenty-fifth verse of the ninth chapter.

In the first part of the twenty-fourth verse of the seventh chapter the Lord declared, "Men of poor understanding think of Me, the unmanifest, as having manifestation" while in the first part of the eleventh verse of the ninth chapter He declared,"Fools don't know My higher nature as the Great Lord of beings". Similarly in the second part of the twenty-fourth verse of the seventh chapter the Lord declared, "Men of poor understanding don't know My supreme state, immutable and unsurpassed" while in the second part of the eleventh verse of the ninth chapter He declared, "Fools don't know My supreme nature as the great Lord of beings."

In the twenty-seventh verse of the seventh chapter the Lord said, "All beings are subject to illusion at birth," while the same fact has been pointed out by Him in the third verse of the ninth chapter when He declared, "Men return to the path of the mortal world."

In the third verse of the seventh chapter the Lord has laid special emphasis on the fact that some rare one knows Him in reality while in the thirty-fourth verse of the ninth chapter He has laid special emphasis on the fact that one should entirely depend on Him (surrender one self to Him).

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुन-संवादे राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगो नाम नवमोऽध्यायः ॥ ९ ॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde rājavidyārājaguhyayogo nāma navamo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ, Tat, Sat, the names of the Lord in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavadgītā, the knowledge of Brahma, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, this is the ninth discourse designated: "The Yoga of Sovereign Science and Sovereign Secret."

Words, letters and Uvāca (said) in the Ninth Chapter

(1) In this chapter in **'Atha navamo' dhyāyaḥ'** there are three words, in **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** there are two words in verses there are four hundred and forty-six words and there are thirteen concluding words. Thus the total number of words is four hundred and sixty-four.

(2) In **'Atha navamo'dhyāyaḥ'** there are seven letters, in **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** there are seven letters, in verses there are one thousand, one hundred and twelve letters and there are fifty-one concluding letters. Thus the total of the letters is one thousand, one hundred and seventy-seven. Out of the thirty-four verses of this chapter the twentieth and the twenty-first verses are each of forty-four letters while each of the remaining thirty-two verses is of thirty-two letters.

(3) In this chapter there is one **'Uvāca'** (said) **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'.**

Metres Used in the Ninth Chapter

In this chapter out of the thirty-four verses, in the twentieth and twenty-first verses there is **'Upajāti'** metre. Out of the remaing thrity-two verses in the first quarter of the first verse 'bha-gaṇa' and in the third quarter 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'saṁkīrṇa-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the second verse 'ra-gaṇa' being used there is **'ra-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the third, and tenth verses 'bha-gaṇa' being used there is **'bha-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the seventeenth verse and in the third quarter of the thirteenth and twenty-sixth verses 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'na-vipulā'** metre. The remaining twenty-five verses are possessed of the characteristics of right **'pathyāvaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

Śrī Hariḥ

TENTH CHAPTER

Introduction

Lord Kṛṣṇa was explaining knowledge with realization in the seventh chapter. But Arjuna put some questions in between. So the Lord answered his questions and then again started the same previous topic in the ninth chapter and concluded the chapter by advising exclusive surrender to the Lord. But He was not satisfied with what He had already said to Arjuna. As a devotee wants to know His glories in detail (Gītā 10/18), He also wanted to say something confidential to His loving devotee, Arjuna. So by His grace without being inquired by Arjuna He starts the topic in the tenth chapter.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

भूय एव महाबाहो शृणु मे परमं वचः ।
यत्तेऽहं प्रीयमाणाय वक्ष्यामि हितकाम्यया ॥ १ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

bhūya eva mahābāho śṛṇu me paramaṁ vacaḥ
yatte'haṁ prīyamāṇāya vakṣyāmi hitakāmyayā

The Blessed Lord said:

Once again , O mighty-armed, listen to My supreme word, which I shall speak to you, who are so loving, out of solicitude for your welfare. 1

Comment:

'Bhūya eva'—The knowledge of glories of the Lord promote devotion. So the Lord by His grace in the seventh chapter (From the 8th to the 12th verses) mentioned His seventeen glories and in the ninth chapter (From the 16th to 19th verses) mentioned His thirty-seven glories. Here in order to tell some more glories* and to supplement the glory of devotion mentioned (in Gītā 8/14 and 9/22,34) the Lord uses the expression 'Bhūya eva' (Again verily) to explain His devotion in a special way.

'Śṛṇu me paramaṁ vacaḥ'—The Lord wants to tell His merits and glories to Arjuna because he is His devout devotee. So He asks him to listen to His supreme word.

Secondly wherever Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to disclose His secret to Arjuna, He uses such terms as 'supreme words' etc., as in the third verse of the fourth chapter he said, "This secret is supreme" because He who taught the immortal Yoga to the sun-god was sitting before him and was driving his horses, and also in the sixty-fourth verse of the eighteenth chapter He says to Arjuna, "Listen again to My supreme word" and His supreme word is "Surrendering all duties to Me, seek refuge in Me alone. I shall liberate you from all sins; grieve not" (Gītā 18/66). Here in this context the Lord means to say that diverse feelings of creatures emanate from Him alone and His devotees such as the seven great seers, four Sanaka etc., and fourteen Manus were born of His will i.e., He is the root of all of them.

As while talking about knowledge (wisdom) in the thirteenth chapter, He continues the same topic in the fourteenth chapter; similarly explaining the topic of knowledge with realization in the seventh and ninth chapters, He continues it in the tenth chapter. At the beginning of the fourteenth chapter He declares that He shall impart to him once more the supreme knowledge, the best of all forms of knowledge, while at the beginning of the tenth chapter here He says to Arjuna to listen to His supreme word, which means that in the Discipline of Knowledge there is Pre-

* In the tenth chapter the Lord has mentioned His forty-five glories from the fourth to the sixth verses.

dominance of discrimination while in the Discipline of Devotion there is predominance of reverence and faith.

'Yette'haṁ prīyamāṇāya vakṣyāmi hitakāmyayā'—If a listener has reverence and faith in the speaker and the speaker has the feeling for the welfare of the listener, whatever he says, is fixed in the mind of the listener. Thus the listener's devotion to the Lord sprouts forth.

Now a doubt rises that the Lord again and again has laid emphasis to root out desires but here He Himself has a desire. The clarification is that when a person has desire for his pleasures and prosperity etc., that is called a desire and is harmful. But when there is a desire to do good to others, that is not a desire, that is renunciation, the means to root out a desire. Therefore the Lord teaches a lesson to the beings that as He is engrossed in the welfare of all beings, they should also have dealings with others for their welfare. By doing so their desires are easily wiped out and they attain Him. "Those who are engaged in the welfare of all beings come unto Me (Who is endowed with attributes)" (Gītā 12/4). "Those who are actively engaged in the welfare of all beings attain the Beatitude of Brahma" (Gītā 5/25).

Link:–Why does the Lord Himself speak His supreme word? The clarification is.

न मे विदुः सुरगणाः प्रभवं न महर्षयः ।
अहमादिर्हि देवानां महर्षीणां च सर्वशः ॥ २ ॥

na me viduḥ suragaṇāḥ prabhavaṁ na maharṣayaḥ
ahamādirhi devānāṁ maharṣīṇāṁ ca sarvaśaḥ

Neither gods nor the great sages know the secret of My origin; for I am the prime cause in all respects of gods as well as the great sages. 2

Comment:

'Na me viduḥ suragaṇāḥ prabhavaṁ na maharṣayaḥ'—Though the bodies, intellects, worlds and materials of the gods are divine, yet they don't know the Lord's origin, His incarnations and His divine glories etc. They are unable to know Him in His entire form; and His vision is difficult for them. They are always eager to behold His form (Gītā 11/52).

Even the seers or the liberated souls possessing uncommon divine powers who have risen above the world don't know the secret of His origin completely.

Here the Lord has mentioned the gods and the great seers having divine experience because the gods hold the highest rank next to the Lord and the great seers possess the highest knowledge. They don't know Him because whatever power, intellect, resources they have at their disposal, have been given by the Lord and so they are limited. So how can the limitless Lord be known by limited power and resources etc.? As the birth and marriage of the mother remains beyond the access of the son, the gods and the seers who emanate from the Lord, don't know Him who is their cause. The effect can merge in the cause but can't know it. Similarly the seers can't know Him, their cause. They can merge in Him. The whole universe including the gods and the seers emanates from Him and merges into Him.

The gods and sages can't know the beginning, the end and the interim (the present) of the Lord viz., how He is and in how many forms He has manifested Himself. They can't know His dimensions and limits. The reason is that He was the same when they were born and He will remain the same when they merge die. So how can they, whose bodies are born and die, know the beginningless, endless and limitless God with their limited intellect, ability and power etc. How can the limitless be confined to the limited intellect?

In the fourteenth verse of this chapter also the Lord declares that neither the gods nor the demons know His manifestation because the gods are ever engaged in enjoying heavenly pleasures while demons in knavery and beguilement. Thus gods have no time to know Him and demons can't know Him by their knavery and beguilement.

Link:–In the previous verse it has been mentioned that neither gods nor the great sages know the secret of His origin How then can an ordinary striver know Him and attain salvation ? The Lord answers.

यो मामजमनादिं च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम्।
असंमूढः स मर्त्येषु सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥ ३ ॥

yo māmajamanādiṁ ca vetti lokamaheśvaram
asaṁmūḍhaḥ sa martyeṣu sarvapāpaiḥ pramucyate

He who knows Me as unborn and beginningless, as the Great Lord of the world, he, undeluded among men, is purged of all sins. 3

Comment:

'Yo māmajamanādiṁ ca vetti lokamaheśvaram'—Though a striver can't know the Lord in His entirety, yet he can know Him so much that he can attain salvation. His knowledge about Him is that he can assume that the Lord is unborn, beginningless and He is the Lord of all the lords of the different worlds. The Lord is beyond time. The time which is referred in the world by days and months etc., is ordinary time while the Lord is beyond time. This time rests in the Lord. The Lord is eternal time. Such firm assumption removes all doubts about His glories.

'Asaṁmūḍhaḥ sa martyeṣu sarvapāpaiḥ pramucyate'—The Lord is birthless, beginningless and is the Lord of all the lords. It means that He is imperishable and the supreme sovereign of the world. So He pervades everywhere, every time, all things and is the Lord of everyone. It means that He is here, now, in him and his Lord also, while the world is perishing every moment. Thus knowing the reality about the Lord and the world, he renounces his affinity with the world. (including the body) and becomes free from the feeling of 'I'ness and 'Mineness'. Thus knowing the truth he is no more deluded and by becoming free from the feeling of 'I'ness and 'Mineness' he has affinity with the Lord and becomes free from all sins of the present and the past. Mere learning of affinity with God will not serve the purpose. It is to be given practical shape.

What is delusion? Delusion means lack of knowledge about the reality. What is reality? The reality is that a man can't be identified with the world and the body, while he can't be separated from the Lord. The man who is free from this delusion can know Him endowed with attributes and attributeless, endowed with form and formless in reality and has not the least doubt about His different forms, sports, secrets and glories etc.

Link:–The Lord in the next three verses explains His supreme word which He mentioned in the first verse.

बुद्धिर्ज्ञानमसंमोहः क्षमा सत्यं दमः शमः।
सुखं दुःखं भवोऽभावो भयं चाभयमेव च ॥ ४ ॥
अहिंसा समता तुष्टिस्तपो दानं यशोऽयशः।
भवन्ति भावा भूतानां मत्त एव पृथग्विधाः ॥ ५ ॥

buddhirjñānamasaṁmohaḥ kṣamā satyaṁ damaḥ śamaḥ
sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ bhavo'bhāvo bhayaṁ cābhayameva ca
ahiṁsā samatā tuṣṭistapo dānaṁ yaśo'yaśaḥ
bhavanti bhāvā bhūtānāṁ matta eva pṛthagvidhāḥ

Intellect, wisdom, non-delusion, forgiveness, truth, self-restraint (control over the mind and the senses), joy, (pleasure), and sorrow (pain), evolution and dissolution, fear and fearlessness, non-violence, equanimity, contentment, austerity, charity, fame and disrepute—these diverse feelings of creatures emanate from Me alone. 4-5

Comment:

'Budhiḥ'—It is the faculty of deciding something with an aim.

Jñānam'—It is the discrimination between the real and the unreal, the proper and the improper, the imperishable and the perishable etc. This discrimination has been bestowed upon every human being by God.

'Asaṁmohaḥ'—It is non-delusion. To have the feeling of 'I'ness and 'Mineness' with the perishable body and the world is delusion and its absence is non-delusion.

'Kṣamā—Howsoever harm a man may cause us, if we bear it in spite of possessing power to punish him and we have the sentiment that he should not be punished by God here or hereafter. This sentiment is called 'Kṣamā.'

'Satyam'—Truth is the accurate presentation of what one has heard, seen and known without selfishness and pride.

'Damaḥ śamaḥ'—By having the aim of God-Realization control over the senses is called 'Damaḥ' and control over the mind pleasures is so that it may not think of mundane called 'Śamaḥ'.

'Sukhaṁ duḥkhaṃ'—Feeling of pleasure in favourable circumstances is 'Sukham' and feeling of pain in unfavourable circumstances is 'Duḥkham'.

'Bhavo' bhāvaḥ'—'Bhava' means birth or evolution of a thing, being and incident etc., while 'Abhāva' means their death or dissolution.

'Bhayaṁ cābhayameva ca'—The feeling of possibility of some undesired result as a fruit of actions against the saints, scriptures or the social customs is 'Bhaya' (Fear) and lack of fear is 'Abhaya' (Fearlessness)

'Ahiṁsā'—To trouble others with body, mind and speech etc., in all climes, times and circumstances is violence and absence of violence is 'Ahiṁsā' (Non-violence).

'Samatā'—Evenness of mind or temper in favourable and unfavourable circumstances is 'Samatā' (Equanimity).

'Tuṣṭiḥ'—Contentment in all the circumstances is 'Tuṣṭiḥ'.

'Tapaḥ'—To bear all the circumstances happily while performing one's duty is 'Tapaḥ' (Austerity). To observe fast on 'Ekādaśī etc., is also austerity.

'Dānam'—It is the gift of the objects or money earned by honest means which is made to the deserving person happily without having any desire for the fruit of action (Gītā 17/20).

'Yaśo' yaśaḥ'—Fame that a man receives as the outcome of his good qualities, feelings and actions is 'Yaśa' while 'Ayaśaḥ' is the ill fame or disrepute that a man receives as the outcome of his bad conduct, feelings and deeds.

'Bhavanti bhāvā bhūtānāṁ matta eva pṛthagvidhāḥ'—Diverse feelings of creatures emanate from the Lord i.e., He is the base and the root of all of them.

Here 'Mattaḥ' stands for the Lord's power and influence while 'Pṛthagvidhāḥ' stands for His divine glories.

One who knows that all of the good or bad actions and feelings in the world are nothing besides the sports of the Lord gets established in Him (Gītā 10/7).

Out of the twenty diverse feelings mentioned here twelve have been mentioned as single and they are all born in the mind. Besides them fearlessness which makes a pair with fear is also born in the mind. The remaining seven feelings are contradictory. Out of

them evolution and dissolution, fame and disrepute—these four are fruits of previous actions while pleasure, pain and fear—these three are the outcome of folly. A man is free in wiping out this folly.

The Lord is the base and root of all these twenty feelings. In the twelfth verse of the seventh chapter also He declares that whatever entities there are born of Sattva (Goodness), of Rājas (Activity) (Passion) and Tāmas (Indertia) (Ignorance), know them all as evolved from Him alone.

Therefore the purpose of the Lord is to draw attention towards Him Who is the root of all divine glories and feelings etc.

An Important Fact

Whatever a striver beholds in the world is the Lord's manifestation and His sport. His sport includes His boyhood as the incarnation (Rāma) where He manifests Himself, is loved by His father, mother and other people at Ayodhyā, is received and shown hospitality by His father-in-law and mother-in-law and other people of Janakapurī. Then His sport continues in the woods where He comes across both devotees and demons. Afterwards in Laṅkā his sport includes the battle and bloodshed. Thus all these sports have been included in the Rāmāyaṇa. Similarly all the feelings, actions whether similar or dissimilar are the sports of the Lord. So a striver should ever behold him only in various persons, things, incidents and feelings etc., because He is the root of all of them.

महर्षयः सप्त पूर्वे चत्वारो मनवस्तथा।
मद्भावा मानसा जाता येषां लोक इमाः प्रजाः ॥ ६ ॥

maharṣayaḥ sapta pūrve catvāro manavastathā
madbhāvā mānasā jātā yeṣāṁ loka imāḥ prajāḥ

The seven great seers, the more ancient four Sanaka etc., and fourteen Manus, who are all devoted to Me, are born of My mind and all these creatures in the world have come forth from them. 6

Comment:

[In the previous verses the Lord mentioned His twenty glories in the form of feelings. Now in this verse He mentions His twenty-five divine glories in the form of persons who are the administrators of the entire creation.]

'Maharṣayaḥ sapta'—The seven great seers are those who possess seven qualities—they are long lived, they have revealed the sacred formulas, they are glorious, they possess divine vision, they are learned, they have realized righteousness and they are the inventor of the 'Gotras' (sub-castes). These seven seers are—Marīci, Aṅgirā, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasiṣṭha. They know the Vedas and are known as the annotators of the Vedas. They are the administrators of the creation and are appointed to help Brahmā, the creator in his work.

'Pūrve catvāraḥ'—Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra were the first to be born of the mind of Brahmā after he did penance. They are the manifestations of the Lord. They always remain children of five years. They wander in the three worlds to promulgate devotion, knowledge (wisdom) and dispassion. They always utter 'Hari Śaraṇam' (Refuge in the Lord). They love divine discourses and so one of them holds divine discourses and the other three listen to him.

'Manavastathā'—In a day of Brahmā, which consists of 43,20,000,000 years of mortals, there are fourteen Manus. They are Svāyambhūva, Svarociṣa, Uttama, Tāmasa, Raivata, Cākṣuṣa, Vaivasvata, Sāvarṇi, Dakṣasāvarṇi. Brahmasāvarṇi Dharmasāvarṇi, Rudrasāvarṇi, Devasāvarṇi

and Indrasāvarni.* They are the creators and activators of the world by carrying out Brahmā's orders.

'Mānasā jātāḥ'—They are born of the mind of Brahmā in order to create the universe. So they can be called Brahmā's sons. They can also be called the Lord's sons because the Lord manifested Himself as Brahmā in order to create the world. The whole creation is the product of the Lord's mind.

'Madbhāvā'—They are all devoted to the Lord.

'Yeṣāṁ loka imāḥ Prajāḥ'—There are two types of creatures in the world— those born of the contact of the male and the female and those born of word (sacred word or text) or preaching. The former are called 'Binduja' while the latter are called 'Nādaja'.

All the great saints and souls of the past, the present and the future following the path of renunciation as well as Sanaka etc., who were not married belong to the latter type while the off-springs born of the seven great sages and fourteen Manus who were married belong to the former type.

Link:–After mentioning His divine glories in the form of feelings and persons from the fourth verse to the sixth verse, now in the next verse the Lord explains the fruit of the knowledge of divine glories.

एतां विभूतिं योगं च मम यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
सोऽविकम्पेन योगेन युज्यते नात्र संशयः ॥ ७ ॥

etāṁ vibhūtiṁ yogaṁ ca mama yo vetti tattvataḥ
so'vikampena yogena yujyate nātra saṁśayaḥ

He who knows in reality this divine glory and power of Mine is endowed with unfaltering Yoga of devotion; of this there is no doubt. 7

Comment:

'Etāṁ vibhūtiṁ yogaṁ ca mama'—'Etām' stands for 'the near most'—His divine glories and Yoga power described from the fourth to the sixth verses. 'Vibhūti' stands for His divine glories and 'Yoga' stands for His singular infinite power. All His divine glories are born of Him. This is His divine Yoga (Gītā 9/5). The same has been called His supreme Yoga (Gītā 11/8) while the Lord shows His macrocosmic form to Arjuna.

An Important Fact

When a man enjoys worldly pleasures, his power is mitigated and the things are destroyed. Thus there is a double loss. But if he uses the things without deriving pleasure out of them, his power is not mitigated. Actually there is no real joy in enjoying sense-objects. Real joy comes out of self-control. This self-control can be classified into two kinds (i) Control over others (ii) Self-control. The first means that the sorrows of others may be annihilated and they may become happy—with this sentiment to direct them towards the virtuous path by deviating them from the wrong path. The second one means to renounce selfishness and pride totally and not to enjoy pleasures in the least. This two-fold self-control is known as 'Yoga' or 'power'. This Yoga or power is innate in the Lord while in other creatures it is the result of practice.

When a man controls others with egoistic and selfish feelings, he experiences a sort of joy. In this joy his power is mitigated and he, whom he controls, becomes a slave. Therefore instead of this sort of control, there should be such control in which there is no selfish or egoistic feeling and which involves welfare of others and their freedom from sufferings since eternity and attainment of supreme bliss—this is excellent and supreme control. At the top of it stands the Lord's control and that is called 'Yoga'.

* A day of Brahmā consists of a thousand fourfold ages. Out of it one Manu rules over more than seventy-one fourfold ages. Now Brahmā is running in his fifty-first year in which the seventh Manu named-Vaivasvata is ruling over.

The term 'Yoga' also stands for equanimity, union with God and power. The Lord is all powerful. All power comes from Him only. This power is partly revealed in man if he becomes desireless. On having desires, power is mitigated and on effacement of desires, power is accumulated. By working continuously, power is exhausted and by repose it is gained. When a man gets tired by speaking continuously, he regains power by silence. Power is mitigated in creation and gained in dissolution. It means that power is mitigated by affinity with Nature and regained by renunciation.

'Yo vetti tattvataḥ'—A discerning man knows that whatever singularity is seen in the universe is the power and glory of the Lord. As a goldsmith while making ornaments of different kinds always keeps in mind that in them there is nothing besides gold, a striver should behold every person, object or action as the manifestation of the Lord because all the persons and objects etc., are kaleidoscopic and perishable; so they have no singularity of their own. Whatever singularity is seen in them, is the reflection of the Lord Who is eternal and imperishable. Therefore an onlooker should behold the Lord everywhere. This is real knowledge.*

'So'vikampena yogena yujyate'—He is endowed with unfaltering devotion to the Lord i.e., he is attracted only towards the Lord.

'Nātra saṁśayaḥ'—There is no doubt. It means that after knowing the Lord in reality, a striver instead of paying attention to the divine glory and power etc., beholds them only as the manifestation of the Lord i.e., he beholds only God. No worldly grandeur can influence him. Thus it fosters his devotion to Him.

Link:–In the previous verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explained that he who knows in reality His divine glory and power is endowed with unfaltering Yoga of devotion. What is meant by unfaltering Yoga of devotion ? The answer comes in the next verse.

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते ।
इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ॥ ८ ॥

ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate
iti matvā bhajante māṁ budhā bhāvasamanvitāḥ

I am the origin of the whole creation; from Me all things move. The wise knowing this, full of devotion, worship Me. 8

Comment:

[Whatever was said in the previous verse that what is seen, heard and known is nothing besides the divine glory of the Lord, is repeated in this verse. Whatever has been said in the seventh, eighth and ninth chapters has been condensed in the first line of this verse.]

'Ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavaḥ'—The Lord is the material and efficient cause of all creatures born through mind, word, semen, earth, womb, egg, sweat viz., He is the origin of the whole creation-sentient or insentient, moving or unmoving †. He is the material cause as well as the efficient cause of the entire creation. It means that He has manifested Himself in the form of the entire creation.

'Mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate'—Everything in the world moves because of the Lord. As electricity manifests itself in various forms in instruments suited to those

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* In this context of devotion 'Tattvataḥ vetti' (Knows in truth) should mean 'Assumption (Supposition) in truth.' When a man assumes that he belongs to a particular caste his assumption continues so long as he does not renounce it. That assumption is not true because that depends on affinity with the body and so can perish. But the assumption that the Lord is the root and origin of the entire universe is real. So it can never perish but changes into knowledge.

† As the Lord has declared in the sixth verse of the seventh chapter that He is the source of the entire creation and in the fourth verse of the fourteenth chapter that He is the seed giving father. Here He declares that He is the origin of the whole creation.

forms, the Lord is the root of all the worldly actions.

'Aham sarvasya....pravartate'—The Lord means to say that a striver instead of paying attention to the various feelings, actions, things and persons etc., should behold the Lord Who is the origin of all of them.

The Lord uses the term 'Mattaḥ' (From Me) again and again as in the seventh and the twelfth verse of the seventh chapter and fifth and the eighth verse of the tenth chapter to emphasize the fact that all the feelings, actions and creatures etc., emanate from Him, remain established in Him and merge into Him. So if a striver either knows or assumes this fact that in the entire universe there is nothing else besides the Lord, he will have unwavering unity (Yoga) with Him.

Here by giving the world 'Sarva' (All) two times, the Lord means to say that only He is the creator and conductor of the entire universe.

'Iti matvā bhāvasamanvitāḥ'—When the strivers assume that the Lord is the creator and conductor of the entire creation and He is the supreme Lord and none is equal to Him, none will be equal to Him and none can be equal to Him, they place their faith and devotion in Him and their attention never deviates from Him. In those devotees who entirely depend on Him, the divine traits such as equanimity, fearlessness, truthfulness etc., sprout forth naturally. The reason is that where there is Divinity, there are divine traits.

'Budhā'—They are wise because they behold the Lord as the origin of the entire creation. The same fact has been pointed out by the Lord in the eighteenth and the nineteenth verses of the fifteenth chapter when He declares, "One who knows Me beyond perishable Matter and superior to the imperishable soul, knows Me in reality and worships Me with all his heart" (Gītā 15/18-19).

'Mām bhajante'—Uttering and loud chanting the name of the Lord, thinking of the Lord, meditation, listening to the divine discourses, the study of the scriptures such as the Gītā, the Rāmāyaṇa etc.—this is all worship. But the real worship is that in which a devotee likes and loves nothing besides the Lord. The forgetfulness of the Lord is repugnant to their nature. Such absorbtion in God is real worship.

An Important Fact

Every striver should know that the Lord is the origin and the source of power of all things, objects, creatures and persons. So the only aim of the life should be God-Realization. The Lord mentions His divine glories and power in order to divert the attention of the strivers towards Him. This fact has been mentioned in the Gītā several times—'He from whom is the emanation of all beings, by Whom all this is pervaded, should be worshipped through the performance of one's duty' (18/46). "The Lord Who dwells in the hearts of all beings and Who is the source of inspiration for them, they should seek refuge in Him alone with all their heart" (18/61-62) etc.

The Disciplines of Action, Knowledge and Devotion can be different for different strivers according to their tastes and interests, but the above mentioned knowledge is very necessary for all the strivers.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord mentions the way of the worship of those devotees.

मच्चित्ता मद्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम्।
कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥ ९ ॥*

* In this verse there are six points. A devotee has to do the first two things himself—to fix his mind on Him and to surrender himself to Him. The next two points—enlightening each other and ever speaking of Him, occur when two devotees meet and the last two—contentment and the delight are the fruits of the first four.

maccittā madgataprāṇā bodhayantaḥ parasparam
kathayantaśca māṁ nityaṁ tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca

With their minds fixed on Me, with their lives surrendered to Me, enlightening each other about My greatness and ever speaking of Me, they ever remain contented and delighted. 9

Comment:

[Those who have realized that the Lord is the origin and source of inspiration of all things and creatures, for them nothing remains to be done, to be known and to be acquired. They have ever to be engrossed in Him. The same fact has been explained in this verse.]

'Maccittā'—Their minds are fixed on the Lord. There are two things—one is fixation of the mind on the Lord and the second is fixation of the self on the Lord. When a devotee, by admitting the fact that he is the Lord's, is absorbed in Him, his mind, intellect etc., are automatically absorbed in Him, because these organs depend on the doer. So if the devotee worships the Lord and wants to fix his mind on Him by thinking that he is a worldly householder, it is very difficult for him to fix his mind. It means that if he himself remains devoted to the world and attempts to absorb his mind in God, it is practically impossible.

Secondly a person can fix his mind on what he likes the most and he likes the most the thing or person with whom he has his affinity. So a devotee should admit the fact that he is only the Lord's and the Lord is only his. The body and the world are not his. So he surrenders himself to Him and His will becomes his will. Such devotees are said to have fixed their minds on God.

In the Gīta 'Mana' and 'Citta' have heen used in different senses (6/14) as well as in the same sense. Here it has been used in the same sense as in 7/4. It means that it includes both 'Mana' and 'Citta'.

'Madgataprāṇā'—They surrender their life and actions, spiritual as well as mundane to the Lord. Just like the cowherdesses, they surrender their lives to Him. They are not attached to their vital force. They have neither a desire to live nor are afraid of death, because they know that they are different from life and have no affinity with it while their affinity with the Lord is axiomatic. So a striver's only aim should be to realize God without caring for the favourable and unfavourable circumstances such as health and sickness, respect and insult and pleasure and pain etc.

'Bodhayantaḥ parasparam'—When two devotees meet, they talk about the sport, secret, qualities & glories of the Lord. Thus they share the devotion with each other and are more absorbed in Him*. They are enlightened with the help of each other in the same way as darkness is dispelled from under two earthen lighted lamp if they are placed facing each other.

'Kathayantaśca mām'—When they meet any devotee who is interested in listening to the divine discourse, they hold the divine discourse. As Sanaka etc., all the four hold divine discourses and also listen to them. One of them becomes the speaker and the other three become the listeners. But the speaker is not proud of his talent and the listener is not ashamed of his becoming a listener.

'Nityaṁ tuṣyanti ca'—Thus the exchange of those divine discourses, sports, qualities, glories and secret etc., of the Lord creates contentment. They get contentment only in Him.

'Ramanti ca'—They take delight in him. In that state they become one with Him, there is no difference in them. Sometimes a devotee has devotion to the Lord, while at times the Lord becomes a devotee to His own devotee. In this way the sport of love between the Lord and

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* It is the nature of devotees that their organs of speech, ears and minds are applied respectively in uttering, hearing and thinking of the Lord's sports only. As lustful men relish sex talks, so do devotees relish the Lord's sports and stories. (Śrīmadbhā. 10/13/2)

his devotee continues for infinite ages and this love enhances every moment.

Thus a striver should divert all his feelings and actions towards the Lord.

Link:–By explaining the way of the worship of the devotees in the previous verse, now in the next two verses the Lord explains how He responds to those devotional activities of the devotees.

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥ १० ॥

teṣāṁ satatayuktānāṁ bhajatāṁ prītipūrvakam
dadāmi buddhiyogaṁ taṁ yena māmupayānti te

To them, ever devout, worshipping Me with love, I confer that Yoga of wisdom (equanimity) by which they attain Me. 10

Comment:

[A devotee to the Lord has no desire to gain wisdom or equanimity or anything else besides the Lord*. They ever remain absorbed in Him. So their whole responsibility goes to the Lord, they become mere instruments in His hands. So the Lord confers the Yoga of wisdom on them.]

'Teṣāṁ satatayukatānām'—'Ever steadfast' are those whose (according to the ninth verse) minds are fixed on Him whose lives are surrendered to Him, who talk about the sport, secret, qualities and glories of the Lord and exchange them with one another, and who ever remain contented and delighted in Him.

'Bhajatāṁ prītipūrvakam'—Not to speak of the mundane pleasures and prosperity and occult powers those devotees don't have a desire even for knowledge and dispassion. They ever remain absorbed in the Lord without thinking of anything else even in dream.

'Dadāmi buddhiyogaṁ tam'—The Lord confers on them the Yoga of wisdon viz., equanimity by which they remain the same in favourable and unfavourable circumstances, profit and loss, honour and dishonour, praise and blame and they think of the equanimity as the Lord's gift, not their own achievement.

'Yena'—The devotees by that equanimity, which is conferred on them by the Lord, attain Him.

'Māmupayānti te'—Those devotees, who surrender themselves to Him and remain contented and delighted in Him, attain Him i.e., they attain the state of perfection. Whatever deficiency they felt is perfected.

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।
नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥ ११ ॥

teṣāmevānukampārthamahamajñānajaṁ tamaḥ
nāśayāmyātmabhāvastho jñānadīpena bhāsvatā

In order to shower My grace on them, I, dwelling in their self (hearts), destroy the ignorance–born darkness by the luminous lamp of wisdom. 11

* The devotee, who has surrendered himself to Me, has no desire either for the posts of Brahmā, the creator and Indra, the king of the gods, or the kingdoms of the earth and the under world or all the accomplishments of Yoga and even emancipation. (Śrīmadbhā. 11/14/14)

Comment:

'Teṣāmevānukampārthamaham–ajñānajaṁ tamaḥ'—Those devotees have no desire to gain any mundane pleasure or prosperity etc. They don't even aspire for salvation. They worship the Lord with devotion without a desire for fruit. The Lord is very much pleased with their devotion and His heart melts with compassion. So He wants to confer something on them. But they have no desire. So by His grace He destroys their ignorance-born darkness and enables them to attain perfection. He supplements all their deficiencies.

'Ātmabhāvasthaḥ'—Generally people identify themselves with their bodies, and consider the change of their bodies as their own change. Actually the self is different from the body. The Lord dwells in that self.

'Bhāsvatā jñānadīpena nāśayāmi'– The Lord destroys the ignorance-born darkness by the luminous lamp of wisdom. It means that He enables a devotee to realize the self or to behold the Divine Presence within himself. The devotee has not to practise any spiritual discipline like hearing, thinking and assimilation etc. He has not to make any efforts for Self-Realization.

An Important Fact

When a devotee remains absorbed only in the Lord, the Lord confers on him equanimity as well as Self-Realization. It means that the devotee has not to make efforts either for equanimity or Self-Realization* because where there is mother in the form of devotion, there are the sons in the form of dispassion and knowledge (Self-Realization). It means that the perfection attained by the aspirant may have some deficiency. But the perfection conferred by the Lord has not even a trace of imperfection.

As the Lord provides gain and security to those devotees who worship Him alone (Gītā 9/22), He confers equanimity and Self-Realization to those devotees who entirely depend on Him though they have no desire. And even by conferring equanimity and Self-Realization He remains a debtor to them. As the Lord Himself declares in the Bhāgavata for the cowherdesses. "I can't pay the debt of the chaste cowherdesses even by having the long age of the gods because they broke the chain of domestic affinity which even the great seers and sages don't break easily" (Śrīmadbhā. 10/32/22).

The devotees are so much absorbed in the devotion to the Lord that they are surprised to perceive equanimity and Self-Realization in them. Moreover they pray to God that they should not feel any singularity in them by having His gifts given to them by His grace but they ever want to remain absorbed in devotion to Him. Even if they are vouchsafed the power to emancipate the world, they don't feel elevated in anyway and keep always absorbed in God.

Link:–After listening to the words of the Lord pertaining to His uncommon grace, Arjuna being influenced by His grace, praises Him by using several adjectives in the next four verses.

अर्जुन उवाच

परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान्।
पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभुम्॥ १२॥

* My devotees, besides service to Me, don't ever aspire for five kinds of salvation.

आहुस्त्वामृषयः सर्वे देवर्षिर्नारदस्तथा ।
असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे ॥ १३ ॥

arjuna uvāca
paraṁ brahma paraṁ dhāma pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhavān
puruṣaṁ śāśvataṁ divyamādidevamajaṁ vibhum
āhustvāmṛṣayaḥ sarve devarṣirnāradastathā
asito devalo vyāsaḥ svayaṁ caiva bravīṣi me

Arjuna said:

You are the Supreme Brahma (Eternal) (Pure Consciousness), the Supreme Abode, the Supreme Purifier, the Eternal Divine Person, the Prime Deity, the Unborn, the Omnipresent. Likewise all the sages have acclaimed You, as also celestial sage Nārada, so also Asita, Devala and Vyāsa; and You Yourself also proclaim this to me. 12-13

Comment:

'Paraṁ brahma paraṁ dhāma pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhavān'—Arjuna while praising Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Him that He is the Supreme Imperishable Brahma as He said to him in response to his question (Gītā 8/3), He is the Supreme Abode in Whom the entire universe is established (Gītā 9/18). And He is the most sacred.

'Puruṣaṁ śāśvataṁ divyamādidevamajaṁ vibhum āhustvāmṛṣayaḥ sarve devarṣirnāradastathā asito devalo vyāsaḥ svayaṁ caiva bravīṣi me'—In the holy books such as the Mahābhārata etc., the sages'* celestial sage Nārada†, other sage Asita and his son sage Devala‡ and also great sage Vyāsa§ have acclaimed Him Eternal, Divine Person, Primeval God, Unborn and Omnipresent.

As soul, He is eternal (Gītā 2/20), as formless and having attributes He is Divine Person (Gītā 8/10), as the source of the gods and the great seers He is the Prime Deity (Gītā 10/2). The ignorant folk don't recognize Him as the unborn (Gītā 7/25) while the undeluded know Him as the unborn (Gītā 10/3). All the universe is pervaded by Him in His unmanifest form (Gītā 9/4) and He Himself declares that He is Omnipresent in this verse.

सर्वमेतदृतं मन्ये यन्मां वदसि केशव ।
न हि ते भगवन्व्यक्तिं विदुर्देवा न दानवाः ॥ १४ ॥

sarvametadṛtaṁ manye yanmāṁ vadasi keśava
na hi te bhagavanvyaktiṁ vidurdevā na dānavāḥ

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* Sage Mārkaṇḍeya has said, "Lord Kṛṣṇa is the religious sacrifice of all the religious sacrifices, austerity of austerities and He is present, past and future" (Mahā. Bhīṣma 68/3). Sage Bhṛgu declares that He is God of the gods and He is the supreme Aboriginal Lord Viṣṇu (Mahā. Bhīṣma.68/4).

Sage Aṅgirā declares, "He is the creator of all beings" (Mahā. Bhīṣma 68/6). Sanat Kumāra etc., have said, "The sky and the earth exist by His forehead and arms respectively. All the three worlds are situated in His stomach. He is the Eternal Person. A striver can know, Him by purifying his heart through austerity. He is superior even to the seers who are satisfied by realizing God. He is the Supreme Goal of the generous royal sages who never flee battle-field" (Mahā. Bhīṣma 68/8-10).

† Celestial sage Nārada declares —Lord Kṛṣṇa is the creator of all the worlds and knower of all feelings. He is the Lord of the Lords of deities and the gods (Mahā. Bhīṣma 68/2).

‡ Asita and Devala sages declare—"Lord Kṛṣṇa is the only creator of Brahmā and all the worlds" (Mahā. Vana. 12/50).

§ Great sage Vyāsa declares—"You are the Lord of the Vasus (a class of gods). You have conferred power on Indra, the king of the gods and You are the Supreme Lord of the gods" (Mahā. Bhīṣma.68/5).

I hold as true all that You tell me, O Keśava. Neither the gods nor the demons, O blessed Lord, know your manifestation. 14

Comment:

'Sarvametadṛtaṁ manye yanmāṁ vadasi keśava'—'K' stands for Brahmā, the creator, 'A' stands for Lord Viṣṇu, the preserver, 'Īś' a stands for Lord Śaṅkara, the destroyer and 'Va' stands for 'Vapu' the body. So 'Keśava' stands for the trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śaṅkara. It means that He is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the entire creation.

By using the term 'Yat' (which) Arjuna means to say that whatever the Lord has said to him from the seventh to the ninth chapters, he holds as true. By 'Etat' (this) he means to say that he also believes as true whatever He has said in the tenth chapter about His divine glories and power. It means that He is the creator, conductor and the supreme Lord of the entire creation, without any doubt.

In the Discipline of Devotion importance is attached to faith. Lord Kṛṣṇa in the first verse of this chapter ordered Arjuna to listen to His supreme word. So Arjuna expresses his faith in His words by using the term, 'Ṛtam' (True).

'Na hi te bhagavanvyaktiṁ vidurdevā na dānavāḥ—O Lord, You declared (in Gītā 4/5), "Arjuna, you and I have passed through many births. I know them all while you don't." Similarly You declared (in Gītā 10/2), "Neither the gods nor the great sages know the secret of My birth." Thus Arjuna believes true whatever the Lord declared about His manifestation. Though the gods possess divine power yet that power is perishable. So the gods can't know His manifestation. As far as demons are concerned, they possess uncommon magical and fraudulent power by which they can't know the Lord's manifestation, because He being eternal and limitless, cannot be known by perishable and limited power of demons. It means that the Lord can't be known by the power of men, gods and demons because their power belongs to Matter while He is beyond Matter. Renunciation, dispassion, austerity and study of the scriptures etc., can purify the mind but can't enable a man to know the Lord. The Lord can be known by His grace to the devotee who having exclusive devotion depends on Him only.

स्वयमेवात्मनात्मानं वेत्थ त्वं पुरुषोत्तम ।
भूतभावन भूतेश देवदेव जगत्पते ॥ १५ ॥

svayamevātmanātmānaṁ vettha tvaṁ puruṣottama
bhūtabhāvana bhūteśa devadeva jagatpate

You alone know Yourself by Yourself, O Supreme Person, O Creator of beings, O Lord of beings, O God of gods, O Lord of the universe. 15

Comment:

'Bhūtabhāvana bhūteśa devadeva jagatpate puruṣottama'—Being the origin of all beings even through His thought He is 'Bhūtabhāvana' being the Lord of beings He is Bhūteśa; being the Lord of the gods He is 'Devadeva'; being the preserver of the universe He is 'Jagatpate'; and being supreme of all the persons He is known as 'Puruṣottama' in the world and in the Veda (Gītā 15/18).

In this verse five vocatives have been used for the Lord. In no other verse in the Gītā so many vocatives have been used at a time because he is enraptured by listening to His divine glories and His grace to the devotees.*

'Svayamevātmanātmānaṁ vettha tvam'—He knows Himself by Himself

* Here 'Bhūtabhāvana' 'Bhūteśa' 'Devadeva' 'Jagatpate' and 'Puruṣottama' can denote the sun, Lord Śiva, Lord Gaṇeśa, Durgā and Lord Viṣṇu, the five great deities of the rank of the Lord. By using those five terms Arjuna means to say that He has manifested Himself as these five deities.

without any external help of instruments etc. This knowledge is beyond instruments. It is transcendental. It is not through instruments.

The conclusion from the verse can be drawn that as the Lord knows Himself by Himself, the soul, a fragment of the Lord should also know itself by itself because it can't be known by senses, mind and intellect etc.

Link:–The Lord declared, "He who knows in reality this glory and power of Mine gets established in Me through unwavering devotion" (Gītā 10/7). So Arjuna in the next three verses requests Lord Kṛṣṇa to tell him His divine glories in detail.

वक्तुमर्हस्यशेषेण दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः ।
याभिर्विभूतिभिर्लोकानिमांस्त्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि ॥ १६ ॥

vaktumarhasyaśeṣeṇa divyā hyātmavibhūtayaḥ
yābhirvibhūtibhirlokānimāṁstvaṁ vyāpya tiṣṭhasi

You alone can describe in full Your divine glories, by which You remain pervading these worlds. 16

Comment:

'Yābhirvibhūtibhirlokānimāṁ– –stvaṁ vyāpya tiṣṭhasi'—The Lord in the seventh verse declared that he who knows in reality His glory and power gets established in Him through unfaltering devotion. So Arjuna wants to know His glories and power so that his devotion to Him may be aroused. Arjuna wants to attain salvation through devotion. So he wants to know in full His divine glories which cannot be described by any one else beside Him.

'Vaktumarhasyaśeṣeṇa'— Arjuna tells Lord Kṛṣṇa that He told His glories (in seventh, ninth chapters and also at the beginning of the tenth chapter). He also explained that he who knows His glories is endowed with unfaltering devotion. So Arjuna prays to Him to describe His glories in full so that he may know them and be endowed with unfaltering devotion as this is an easy way for unfalering devotees.

'Divyā hyātamvibhūtayaḥ'—Arjuna calls the glories of the Lord as divine because whatever singularity is seen in the universe is only the Lord's. So a striver should think that whatever singularity or attraction is seen in the universe, is not of the universe but only of the Lord. Therefore to see anything charming in the world is sense-enjoyment while to see the glory of the Lord is 'Vibhūti' and also 'Yoga'.

कथं विद्यामहं योगिंस्त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयन् ।
केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया ॥ १७ ॥

kathaṁ vidyāmahaṁ yogiṁstvāṁ sadā paricintayan
keṣu keṣu ca bhāveṣu cintyo'si bhagavanmayā

How may I know You, O Master of Yoga, by constant meditation ? In what various aspects are You, O blessed Lord, to be meditated upon by me ? 17

Comment:

'Kathaṁ vidyāmahaṁ yogiṁstvāṁ sadā paricintayan'—The Lord in the seventh verse of this chapter said that he who knows Him in reality gets established in Him through unwavering devotion. So

Arjuna asks Him how he may know Him by constant meditation.

'Keṣu keṣu ca bhāveṣu cintyo'si bhagavanmayā'—The Lord in the fourteen verse of the eight chapter declared, "I am easily attainable to the ever steadfast Yogī who constantly thinks of Me with undivided mind." Again He declared in the twenty-second verse of the ninth chapter, "To those devotees who constantly think of Me and worship Me alone, who are ever devout, I provide gain and security. So Arjuna asks Him in what various aspects He is to be thought of by him [Here meditation (thought) is the means while Knowledge about Him is the end.]

Arjuna asks Lord Kṛṣṇa, "In what things, persons, places etc., are You to be thought of by me ?" Lord Kṛṣṇa will further reply, "There is no creature animate or inanimate which can exist without Me. I stand holding the entire universe with a single fragment of Myself." It means that He pervades everywhere, all things, creatures and incidents etc. So whatever glory, brilliance, beauty, prosperity or power etc., he thinks of, he should think it only the Lord's and thus instead of thinking of the universe, he will think only of Him.

विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विभूतिं च जनार्दन ।
भूयः कथय तृप्तिर्हि शृण्वतो नास्ति मेऽमृतम् ॥ १८ ॥

vistareṇātmano yogaṁ vibhūtiṁ ca janārdana
bhūyaḥ kathaya tṛptirhi śṛṇvato nāsti me'mṛtam

Tell me again in detail, O Janārdana, Your power of Yoga and Your glories; for I know no satiety in hearing your nectarean words. 18

Comment:

'Vistareṇātmano yogaṁ vibhūtiṁ ca janārdana'—Lord Kṛṣṇa explained the topic of knowledge (Wisdom) with Realization in the seventh and the ninth chapters in detail but He was not satisfied. So He Himself started the topic again in the tenth chapter by asking Arjuna to listen to His supreme word. Arjuna's attention was drawn particularly towards the Lord's grace and His glories. So he requests Him to tell him again in detail His glories and His power of Yoga so that he may be endowed with unfaltering devotion to Him.

'Bhūyaḥ kathaya tṛptirhi śṛṇvato nāsti me'mṛtam'—Arjuna wants to know what is decidedly good for him (Gītā 2/7; 3/2; 5/1) and Lord Kṛṣṇa has declared that he who knows in reality His divine glory and power is endowed with unfaltering devotion (Gītā 10/7). So Arjuna thinks that it is an easy means to be endowed with unfaltering devotion by knowing His divine glories and that unfaltering devotion will lead him to salvation. So he requests Him to tell His divine glories in detail once again.

As a person while taking a meal demands a tasteful dish again and again, Arjuna wants to listen to the Lord's nectarean words again because His glories are numberless and Arjuna knows no satiety in hearing them.

Link:–In response to Arjuna's request Lord Kṛṣṇa tells him His divine glories.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः ।
प्राधान्यतः कुरुश्रेष्ठ नास्त्यन्तो विस्तरस्य मे ॥ १९ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

hanta te kathayiṣyāmi divyā hyātmavibhūtayaḥ
prādhānyataḥ kuruśreṣṭha nāstyanto vistarasya me

The Blessed Lord said:

Now I shall tell you My divine glories in brief O best of the Kurus, for there is no end to the details of My manifestation. 19

Comment:

'Hanta te kathayiṣyāmi divyā hyātmavibhūtayaḥ'—Arjuna requests Lord Kṛṣṇa to tell him divine glories and power. So Lord Kṛṣṇa starts telling His divine glories here (He will tell His power in the forty-first verse).

By the term 'Divya' (Divine) the Lord means to say that whatever singularity is seen in the universe is the Lord's. Therefore a striver should behold the Lord everywhere in all the things and person etc.

'Prādhānyataḥ kuruśreṣṭha nāstyanto vistarasya me'—Arjuna requests Lord Kṛṣṇa to tell him His divine glories in detail. Lord Kṛṣṇa tells him that He will tell him His divine glories in brief because there is no end to the details of the glories. But in the eleventh chapter when Arjuna hesitatingly says to Lord Kṛṣṇa, "If You consider me capable of beholding Your Cosmic Form, O Lord of Yoga, show me Your Eternal self." Lord Kṛṣṇa asks him to behold His hundreds and thousands of divine forms. How surprising*! It is surprising because a person can hear more than, he can see. The power of vision is limited and less than that of hearing. Then why does the Lord say so? The reason is that by listening to the gospel of the Gītā, Arjuna comes to know the Lord's power more and more. In this chapter when the Lord declares that there is no end to the details of His manifestations, Arjuna comes to know of His endlessness. He thinks that his knowledge about the Lord is very meagre. So he becomes cautious and requests the Lord hesitatingly to show him His Cosmic Form. The Lord by His grace bestows upon him the divine eyes and orders him to behold His hundreds and thousands of divine forms.

Secondly when a listener asks the speaker something, having pride of his own, he can't get the satisfactory answer. But when he puts the question politely, modestly and innocently, he gets the satisfactory answer. In this chapter Arjuna wants to know His glories in order to know His limit. So the Lord declares that there is no end or limit to His glories. So He will tell in brief. But in the eleventh chapter he prays to Him politely and hesitatingly to show him His Universal Form, so the Lord confers on him divine eyes and enables him to behold His Cosmic Form. So a striver by renouncing his pride should totally depend on God in order to gain infinite bliss.

Link:–The Lord from the twentieth verse to the thirty-ninth verse describes His eighty-two divine glories.

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* By the ear we come to know of the things visible as well as invisible (heaven, hell etc.). In the process of theology 'hearing' occupies the first position. In devotion also 'hearing' occupies the first position. We come to know of Pure Consciousness by hearing and then by assumption or knowledge we attain salvation or God-Realization.

When a man sleeps, his senses being contracted merge in the mind, the mind merges in intellect, the intellect merges in ignorance. Thus in his sleep his senses are not active. But if a man at that time is called by his name, he wakes up because of a lot of power in the words. Thus the words have an access not only to the ear but to the self.

Eyes can see the form or colour. But their power is limited and is less than that of ears.

The senses can perceive their own objects only. They can't perceive the Cosmic Soul (Pure Consciousness). The Pure Consciousness can be known by one's own self. So Arjuna said, "You alone know Yourself by Yourself' (Gītā 10/15). In the second chapter the Lord declared, "When a man thoroughly abandons all desires, he is satisfied in the self through the self" (Gītā 2/55). It means that the self can't be perceived by the senses. So the self can't be perceived by eyes; but the ear by perceiving it transmits it to the self.

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।
अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥ २० ॥

ahamātamā guḍākeśa sarvabhūtāśayasthitaḥ
ahamādiśca madhyaṁ ca bhūtānāmanta eva ca

In the self, O Guḍākeśa, seated in the hearts of all beings I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings. 20

Comment:

[The Lord can be thought of in two ways (1) To think of one's favourite Deity only. In case the mind deviates, it should again be fixed on God. (2) Whatever thought comes to the mind, should be considered His mani- festation. With the second view-point the Lord is describing His divine glories.]

'Ahamādiśca madhyaṁ ca bhūtānāmanta eva ca'*—Here by saying that He is the beginning, the middle and the end of all beings, the Lord has given the gist of His divine glories. As in the ornaments made of gold there is nothing besides Gold, though in the middle they have different names and shapes as ornaments, in the same way all the beings are born of Him, they live in Him in different forms and they merge in Him. It means that there is nothing else at the beginning, in the middle and at the end besides the Lord. The Lord pointed out this fact first in the twentieth verse then in the middle in the thirty-second verse and at last in the thirty-ninth verse by declaring Himself as the seed of all beings. It means that all is God (Gītā 7/19). He has also declared that He becomes many fold in different forms (Chāndogya. 6/2/3) and He remains at the end also (Śrīmadbhā. 10/3/25). It means He is in the middle also. In this verse, in the thirty-second and thirty-ninth verses the Lord has mentioned His main glories referring to Himself. In other verses His glories have been mentioned as the chief of the class, the controller of the group or due to some special characteristic of that glory. So a striver should always think that all the divine glories are nothing besides the manifestation of the Lord. So he should behold only God in all of them because Arjuna put the question, "In what aspects are You to be thought of by me" (Gītā 10/17).

'Ahamātmā guḍākeśa sarvabhūtāśayasthitaḥ'—How should a striver make use of these divine glories ? A striver should think that the Lord has manifested Himself in all beings. He is the beginning, the middle and the end of the whole universe. He is the seed of all of them. It means that in the whole universe there is nothing besides Him.

आदित्यानामहं विष्णुर्ज्योतिषां रविरंशुमान् ।
मरीचिर्मरुतामस्मि नक्षत्राणामहं शशी ॥ २१ ॥ †

ādityānāmahaṁ viṣṇurjyotiṣāṁ raviraṁśumān
marīcirmarutāmasmi nakṣatrāṇāmahaṁ śaśī

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* Here the term 'Ādi' (Beginning) and 'Anta' (End) are used in masculine gender while the term 'Madhyam' (Middle) is used in common gender. It means that at the beginning He remains 'I am the prime cause of the gods and great seers, (Gītā 10/2) and at the end also He remains (Śrīmadbhāgavata 10/3/25). But in the middle at the time of creation persons, creatures and objects etc., of masculine , feminine and common gender live in the universe. Thus the common gender includes all the three genders. Therefore the Lord here as well as in the thirty-second verse has used the term 'Madhya' in common gender.

† In these divine glories the sixth inflexion has been used. This inflexion is used to attach importance and to show affinity. In the first part of the verse it has been used for importance while in the second part for affinity.

I am Viṣṇu among the twelve sons of Aditi; and the bright rayed sun among the luminaries; I am glory of the Maruts and the moon among stars. 21

Comment:

'Ādityānāmahaṁ viṣṇuḥ'—Vāmana (Viṣṇu) is the most important son of all the twelve sons of Aditi. As the incarnation of Vāmana He got the property of demons as charity and gave it* to the sons of Aditi viz., to the gods.

'Jyotiṣāṁ raviraṁśumān'—Among the luminaries such as the moon, stars and fire etc., the Lord is the bright rayed sun by whose light all of them are illuminated.

'Maricirmarutāmasmi'—The Lord is the glory of the forty-nine Maruts (wind-gods). It is because of that glory that Indra, the king of the gods split the foetus of Diti into forty-nine parts but the foetus instead of being destroyed was turned from one to forty-nine.

'Nakṣatrāṇāmahaṁ . śaśī'—Lord Kṛṣṇa is the lord named moon of twenty-seven stars such as Aśvinī, Bharaṇī and Kṛttikā etc.

Whatever distinction there is in those divine glories is of the Lord.

[In this context there is the description of the Lord's divine glories rather than His incarnations as "I am Viṣṇu among Aditi's sons" (10/21). "Among wielders of weapon I am Rāma" (10/31), "Among the members of the Vṛṣṇi clan I am Kṛṣṇa and among the Pāṇḍavas I am Arjuna" (10/37).]

वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि देवानामस्मि वासवः ।
इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि भूतानामस्मि चेतना ॥ २२ ॥

vedānāṁ sāmavedo'smi devānāmasmi vāsavaḥ
indriyāṇāṁ manaścāsmi bhūtānāmasmi cetanā

Of the Vedas I am the Sāmaveda; I am Vāsava (Indra) among th gods; of the senses I am the mind and among living beings I am consciousness. 22

Comment:

'Vedānāṁ sāmavedo'smi'—Of the four Vedas, Sāmaveda is the best one suitable for music. In it there is the description of the Lord's glory in the form of Indra's glory. So Sāmaveda is the divine glory of the Lord.

'Devānāmasmi vāsavaḥ'—Of all the gods Indra is the chief one, the lord of the gods. So Lord Kṛṣṇa has mentioned him as His divine glory.

'Indriyāṇāṁ manaścāsmi'—The five senses function properly only if the mind remains with them. If it wanders away, they can't function properly. So the mind is reckoned as the Lord's divine glory.

'Bhūtānāmasmi cetanā'—The difference between a living person and a dead person is that the former has consciousness (life, energy) while the latter has no consciousness. So this consciousness is the Lord's divine glory.

Whatever distinction is there in the divine glories, is the Lord's.

रुद्राणां शंकरश्चास्मि वित्तेशो यक्षरक्षसाम् ।
वसूनां पावकश्चास्मि मेरुः शिखरिणामहम् ॥ २३ ॥

rudrāṇāṁ śaṅkaraścāsmi vitteśo yakṣarakṣasām
vasūnāṁ pāvakaścāsmi meruḥ śikhariṇāmaham

* The sun of the month 'Kārtika' is also known as Viṣṇu.

Among the Rudras I am Śaṅkara; among the Yakṣas (Genies) and Rākṣasas (Demons) I am Kubera. Among the Vasus (a class of the gods) I am the god of fire, and of the mountains I am Meru. 23

Comment:

'Rudrāṇāṁ śaṅkaraścāsmi'—Śaṅkara is the lord of all the eleven Rudras named Hara, Bahurūpa and Tryambaka etc. They are the bestowers of beatitude to others. So Śaṅkara is said to be the Lord's divine glory.

'Vitteśo yakṣarakṣasām'—Kubera is the lord of genies and demons. He is also the lord of fabulous wealth. So he is called the Lord's divine glory.

'Vasūnāṁ pāvakaścāsmi'—The god of fire is the lord of eight Vasus named Dhara, Dhruva and Soma etc. The god of fire is said to be the mouth of the Lord through which oblation reaches the deities. So he is the Lord's divine glory.

'Meruḥ śikhariṇāmaham'—Of all the mountains having mounts of gold, silver and copper etc., the golden Meru mountain is the most important. It is the store house of jewels and diamonds. So this mountain is His glory.

Whatever distinction these divine glories have is the Lord's. So only He should be thought of in all these glories.

पुरोधसां च मुख्यं मां विद्धि पार्थ बृहस्पतिम्।
सेनानीनामहं स्कन्दः सरसामस्मि सागरः॥ २४॥

purodhasāṁ ca mukhyaṁ māṁ viddhi pārtha bṛhaspatim
senānīnāmahaṁ skandaḥ sarasāmasmi sāgaraḥ

Among priests, O Pārtha, know Me to be their chief Bṛhaspati; among generals I am Skanda; among the seats of water, I am the ocean. 24

Comment:

'Purodhasāṁ ca mukhyaṁ māṁ viddhi pārtha bṛhaspatim'—Bṛhaspati is the best of all the priests and he is superior to others in learning and wisdom. He is the preceptor of Indra, the lord of the gods and is the priest of the gods. So he is the divine glory of the Lord.

'Senānīnāmahaṁ skandaḥ'—Skanda (Kārtikeya) is the son of Lord Śaṅkara. He is said to have six faces and twelve arms. He is the general of the gods. So he is the Lord's divine glory.

'Sarasāmasmi sāgaraḥ'—Of the seats of water the ocean is the biggest, is very deep and remains within limits. So it is called the Lord's divine glory.

After beholding these distinctions in the Lord's glories a striver should think only of God.

महर्षीणां भृगुरहं गिरामस्म्येकमक्षरम्।
यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि स्थावराणां हिमालयः॥ २५॥

maharṣīṇāṁ bhṛguraham girāmasmyekamakṣaram
yajñānāṁ japayajño'smi sthāvarāṇāṁ himālayaḥ

Among the great seers I am Bhṛgu, of the words I am the monosyllable 'Om'; of sacrifices, I am the sacrifice of the constant repetition of the Lord's name; and of the immovables, the Himālaya. 25

Comment:

'Maharṣīṇāṁ bhṛguraham'— Among the great seers Bhṛgu is a great devotee possessing wisdom and glory. It was he who by testing the trinity proved Lord Viṣṇu superior to Brahmā and Maheśa. Lord Viṣṇu holds the mark of his foot on His chest. So the Lord's glories are revealed through him.

'Girāmasmyekamakṣaram'— First the mono-syllable 'Oṁ' was revealed. Then 'Gāyatrī' (A Vedic Metre) was revealed from Oṁ; the Vedas were revealed from Gāyatrī; and the scriptures and Purāṇas etc., were revealed from the Vedas. So the Lord has declared 'Oṁ' His divine glory. The Lord has also declared it in 7/8 "I am the sacred syllable 'Oṁ' in all the Vedas" and in 8/13 "He who leaves the body and departs, reciting the one-syllabled 'Oṁ' and dwelling on Me in My absolute aspect, attains the "supreme state," and also in 17/24 "Acts of sacrifice, gift and penance as enjoined by the scriptures, are always undertaken with the utterance of 'Oṁ' by the followers of the Vedas."

'Yajñānāṁ japayajño'smi'—In other sacrifices certain rules and ordinances are to be observed and in performing them any error may be committed which may result in harm. But in the constant repetition of the Lord's name there is no question of any harm and it can be performed at any time without any hard & fast rules and ordinances. The Hindus, Muslims, the Budhas and the Jains etc., all believe that it is a very good means to attain salvation. So the Lord has named it as His divine glory.

'Sthāvarāṇāṁ himālayaḥ'—Among the mountains the Himālaya is the highest and the greatest. Moreover being the abode of the seers for the performance of penance, it is very sacred. The sacred rivers such as the Ganges and the Yamunā etc., emanate from it. Even in these days the great seers and saints meditate on the Lord in the caves of the Himālayas. The sages named Nara-Nārāyaṇa are performing penance there for the salvation of the beings of the world. It is said to be the abode of Lord Śaṅkara's in laws. Lord Śaṅkara also resides on one of its mounts named Kailāsa. So it is called the Lord's divine glory.

Whatever distinction or attraction is seen in the universe is the Lord's but a man by thinking of that distinction or attraction of the world gets entangled in it and thus he has a downfall. If he knows the reality that the distinction is of the eternal Lord, not of the perishable world, he will think of only the Lord and he will develop love for Him.

अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां देवर्षीणां च नारदः ।
गन्धर्वाणां चित्ररथः सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः ॥ २६ ॥

aśvatthaḥ sarvavṛkṣāṇāṁ devarṣīṇāṁ ca nāradaḥ .
gandharvāṇāṁ citrarathaḥ siddhānāṁ kapilo muniḥ

Of all trees I am Aśvattha (the holy fig tree); among the celestial sages, Nārada; among the Gandharvas (celestial songsters), Citraratha; among the siddhas (the Perfect), the sage Kapila. 26

Comment:

'Aśvatthaḥ sarvavṛkṣāṇām'— Aśvattha is the peepul or holy fig tree. Every other tree can grow under it. It can grow even on very hard surface such as the roof or the wall or on the mountain. It has ever been associated with the worship of the Divine. In Āyurveda it is said to be the cure for several diseases. So it is recognized as the Lord's divine glory.

'Devarṣīṇāṁ ca nāradaḥ'—The celestial sage named Nārada always works according to the Lord's will. He becomes an instrument in the Lord's sport. He always

sings of the Lord's glories and virtues on his harp. He inspired the sages Vālmīki and Vyāsa to write the scriptures such as the Rāmāyaṇa and the Bhāgavata. Men, gods, demons etc., all have faith in him and so they consult him and do according to his advice. Therefore he is the glory of the Lord.

'Gandharvāṇāṁ citrarathaḥ'—The celestial songsters and musicians are called Gandharvas. Citraratha is the most prominent of all of them. He was a friend to Arjuna and Arjuna learnt music from him. So the Lord claims him as His divine glory.

'Siddhānāṁ kapilo muniḥ'—The Siddhas (The Perfect) are of two types—those who have attained perfection by spiritual discipline and those who have been endowed with perfection since birth. Sage Kapila belongs to the second type. He emanated from the womb of Devahuti, the wife to sage Kardama. He is the author of the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy and the Lord of those who attained perfection. So the Lord has claimed him as His divine glory.

A striver should always behold the Lord as all the divine glories are His.

उच्चैःश्रवसमश्वानां विद्धि माममृतोद्भवम्।
ऐरावतं गजेन्द्राणां नराणां च नराधिपम्॥ २७॥

uccaiḥśravasamaśvānāṁ viddhi māmamṛtodbhavam
airāvataṁ gajendrāṇāṁ narāṇāṁ ca narādhipam

Among horses, know Me to be Uccaiḥśravā begotten of the churning of the ocean along with nectar; of lordly elephants Airāvata (Indra's elephant); among men, the king. 27

Comment:

'Uccaiḥśravasamaśvānāṁ viddhi māmamṛtodbhavam'—When the ocean was churned, fourteen jewels came out of it. Out of them one of the jewels was Uccaiḥśravā. He is Indra's vehicle and is the king of the horses. So the Lord has claimed him as His divine glory.

'Airāvataṁ gajendrāṇām'—Airāvata is the best of all the elephants. He was also born of the ocean when it was churned. He is also Indra's vehicle. So the Lord has claimed him as His divine glory.

'Narāṇāṁ ca narādhipam'—The king is regarded as the best among men because he fosters, preserves and rules over the subjects. Moreover he is regarded to possess more divine power than other human beings. So he is called the Lord's divine glory.*

A striver should think of the Lord because all of them are His divine manifestations.

आयुधानामहं वज्रं धेनूनामस्मि कामधुक्।
प्रजनश्चास्मि कन्दर्पः सर्पाणामस्मि वासुकिः॥ २८॥

āyudhānāmahaṁ vajraṁ dhenūnāmasmi kāmadhuk
prajanaścāsmi kandarpaḥ sarpāṇāmasmi vāsukiḥ

Of weapons, I am the thunderbolt; of cows, I am the celestial cow Kāmadhenu. I am the sexual desire which is attended by procreation; of serpents., I am Vāsuki. 28

* Here Manu (the progenitor of the human race) of the present Manvantara (the fourteenth part of a day of Brahmā) can also be regarded as the king.

Comment:

'Āyudhānāmahaṁ vajram'—Of all the weapons, the thunderbolt, which was prepared of the bones of the sage Dadhīci who gave up the body, is the best one. It involves the willing self-sacrifice of the sage Dadhīci. So the Lord has named the thunder-bolt His glory.

'Dhenūnāmasmi kāmadhuk'—The celestial cow Kāmadhenu was also born from the churning of the ocean. This cow has the power to supply all the requirements of the gods and men. So she is the Lord's divine glory.

'Prajanaścāsmi kandarpaḥ'—Kandarpa is Cupid, the god of sexual urge in beings. Progeny is possible because of this urge. This progenitive instinct is to be revered if it is utilized for progeny by renouncing the sensous pleasures. This urge is His divine glory. In the eleventh verse of the seventh chapter also the Lord declared, "I am sexual desire not in conflict with virtue or scriptural injunction."

'Sarpāṇāmasmi vāsukiḥ'—Vāsuki is the lord of all serpents and is a devotee of the Lord. It was used as the rope to rotate the Mount Meru in the act of churning the ocean. So the Lord speaks of this serpent as His divine glory.

The singularity seen in these divine glories is the Lord's.

अनन्तश्चास्मि नागानां वरुणो यादसामहम्।
पितॄणामर्यमा चास्मि यमः संयमतामहम्॥ २९॥

anantaścāsmi nāgānāṁ varuṇo yādasāmaham
pitṛīṇāmaryamā cāsmi yamaḥ saṁyamatāmaham

Of the Nāgas (serpents) I am ananta (the serpent-god); of aquatic creatures and water-gods, I am Varuṇa, among the manes I am Aryamā; and among rulers I am Yama, the god of death. 29

Comment:

'Anantaścāsmi nāgānām'—The 'Nāgas' are the snakes living in water. 'Ananta' is the lord of the snakes. It has a thousand hoods. It gives comfort to the Lord by acting as His bed. It joined the Lord's sports several times when He was incarnated. So the Lord speaks of it as His divine glory.

'Varuṇo yādasāmaham'—Varuṇa is the lord of the aquatic creatures and water gods and is a devotee of the Lord. So he is a divine glory of the Lord.

'Pitṛīṇāmaryamā cāsmi'—Aryamā is the presiding deity over all the seven manes such as Kavyavāha, Anala and Soma etc. So he is a divine glory of the Lord.

'Yamaḥ saṁyamatāmaham'—Yama is the lord of death. He purifies the beings by enabling them to reap the fruit of their virtuous and evil actions. He is very just and righteous. He is a devotee of the Lord and the lord of his region. Therefore he is a divine glory of the Lord.

The uniqueness in these glories is not personal. It has emanated only from the Lord. Therefore a striver should think of the Lord when he thinks of His divine glories.

प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम्।
मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनतेयश्च पक्षिणाम्॥ ३०॥

prahlādaścāsmi daityānāṁ kālaḥ kalayatāmaham
mṛgāṇāṁ ca mṛgendro'haṁ vainateyaśca pakṣiṇām

Among the demons I am Prahlāda; among reckoners I am Time; among beasts, I am the Lion; and among birds, Garuḍa (the vehicle of Lord Viṣṇu). 30

Comment:

'Prahlādaścāsmi daityānām'—'Daitya' (Demons) were those who were born of Diti. Among the demons. Prahlāda was the chief demon. He showed great devotion to the Lord without having any desire for the fruit. So he is called a divine glory of the Lord.

The Lord in the case of Prahlāda has used the present tense because His devotees never die. They can be ever beheld by the believers. Even when they merge into the Lord, if a person wants to behold them, the Lord appears in those forms.

'Kālaḥ kalayatāmaham'—Time is the reckoner of the appearance, stay and disappearance of the things and beings in the universe. Therefore it is called a glory of the Lord.

'Mṛgāṇāṁ ca mṛgendro'ham'—The lion is the lord of beasts. He is more powerful and courageous than other wild beasts such as tiger, panther, leopard and bear etc. So he is the glory of the Lord.

'Vainateyaśca pakṣiṇām'—Garuḍa, the son of Vinatā is the lord of birds and God's devotee. He is the vehicle of Lord Viṣṇu. When he flies the sound of the hymns of the Sāmaveda is produced with his wings. So he is the Lord's divine glory.

The distinction in all these glories is the Lord's. So a striver while thinking of them should think of the Lord only.

पवनः पवतामस्मि रामः शस्त्रभृतामहम् ।
झषाणां मकरश्चास्मि स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी ॥ ३१ ॥

pavanaḥ pavatāmasmi rāmaḥ śastrabhṛtāmaham
jhaṣāṇāṁ makaraścāsmi srotasāmasmi jāhnavī

Among purifiers, I am the wind; among wielders of weapon I am Rāma. Among fishes I am alligator; and among rivers, I am the Ganges. 31

Comment:

'Pavanaḥ pavatāmasmi'—Wind is capable of purifying all the things. It makes bodies healthy, so it reveals the Lord's glory.

'Rāmaḥ śastrabhṛtāmaham'—Though Rāma is an incarnation of God, yet as far as the wielders of weapon are concerned, Rāma is the best of all of them. So the Lord has mentioned Rāma as one of His divine glories.

'Jhaṣāṇāṁ makaraścāsmi'—Among fishes the alligator is the most powerful. Therefore the Lord names it His divine glory.

'Srotasāmasmi jāhnavī'—Among rivers, streams and waterfalls etc., the Ganges is the most sacred. Her water is holy because she flows from the feet of Lord Viṣṇu. The believers by beholding or touching her or drinking her water or bathing in her, attain salvation. If a dead man's bones are dropped into her, she leads him to salvation. So she is the Lord's divine glory.

A striver instead of attaching importance to the Lord's divine glories should attach importance to Him.

In the seventeenth verse of this chapter Arjuna put two questions to Lord Kṛṣṇa "How may I know You ?" and "In what aspects are You to be thought of by me ?" The answer is that he should think of the Lord in all His divine glories. The result of that thinking (thought) will be that he will come to know that He is the root or origin of all the divine glories. Thus he will come to know the reality about Him.

When a man beholds any distinction or singularity or beauty in the universe, he gets entangled in it. But if he regards it as the Lord's, he will think only of Him and thus will come to know the reality about Him. By knowing the reality of His glory and power, one is endowed with unwavering devotion to Him (Gītā 10/7).

सर्गाणामादिरन्तश्च मध्यं चैवाहमर्जुन ।
अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां वादः प्रवदतामहम् ॥ ३२ ॥

sargāṇāmādirantaśca madhyaṁ caivāhamarjuna
adhyātmavidyā vidyānāṁ vādaḥ pravadatāmaham

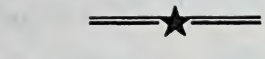
Arjuna, I am the beginning, the end and also the middle of all creations. Of sciences, I am the science of the self (soul); in debates I am the reason. 32

Comment:

'Sargāṇāmādirantaśca madhyaṁ caivāham'—The Lord Himself is the beginning, the middle and the end of all creatures. It means that He is all. So while beholding the universe or the beings one should think of the Lord.

'Adhyātmavidyā vidyānām'—The science which leads a man to salvation is called 'Adhyātma-Vidyā*. All other sciences (learnings) are imperfect. Something remains to be known after their knowledge. But this science is perfect. After knowing it, nothing else remains to be known. So it is the Lord's divine glory.

'Vādaḥ pravadatāmaham'—Debates are of three types—1. Supporting one's point and opposing other's points in order to get victory over the opponent. 2. Only to oppose others. 3. Brushing aside all prejudices, debating by following the reason faithfully, to know the reality. This third one is the reason which is superior to the first two. So it is the Lord's divine glory.



अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि द्वन्द्वः सामासिकस्य च ।
अहमेवाक्षयः कालो धाताहं विश्वतोमुखः ॥ ३३ ॥

akṣarāṇāmakāro'smi dvandvaḥ sāmāsikasya ca
ahamevākṣayaḥ kālo dhātāhaṁ viśvatomukhaḥ

Of letters I am 'A'; of word-compounds I am the dual (Dvandva). I am verily the endless Time; I am the sustainer of all, having My face on all sides. 33

Comment:

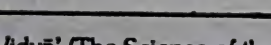
'Akṣarāṇāmakāro'smi'—'A' is the first letter of alphabet. It occupies an important place in both vowels and consonants. The consonants can't be pronounced without this letter. So it is the Lord's glory.

'Dvandvaḥ sāmāsikasya ca'—Out of the four important word-compounds, while both the words in compounding themselves retain equal importance, they are called the dual or 'dvandva'. In it because each word maintains its individuality, the Lord has named it His divine glory.

'Ahamevākṣayaḥ kālaḥ'—The time in itself is beginningless and endless and is called the Lord. In final dissolution when even the sun merges into the Lord, the time is counted or measured through the Lord (Paramātmā) †. So the Lord is eternal time.

Time passes every moment. But here the Lord Who is the endless time remains the same without any modification and change. The same endless Time is the Lord's divine glory. In the eleventh chapter the Lord has said that He is the mighty world-destroying Time (Gītā 11/32).

'Dhātāhaṁ viśvatomukhaḥ'—Having His face on all sides the Lord sees all the creatures. So He sustains all of them very generously. Thus He has described Himself in the form of His divine glory.



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* There is a difference between 'Adhyātma-Vidyā' (The Science of the self) and 'Rājavidyā' (Sovereign science). In the former importance is attached to the attributeless Lord while in the latter to the Lord endowed with attributes i.e., the Lord Who pervades everywhere and every time, all things, creatuers etc.

† In final dissolution Brahmā, the creator also merges into the Lord. So time (of final dissolution) is measured by the eternal and endless Lord.

मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चाहमुद्भवश्च भविष्यताम् ।
कीर्तिः श्रीर्वाक्च नारीणां स्मृतिर्मेधा धृतिः क्षमा ॥ ३४ ॥

mṛtyuḥ sarvaharaścāhamudbhavaśca bhaviṣyatām
kīrtiḥ śrīrvākca nārīṇāṁ smṛtirmedhā dhṛtiḥ kṣamā

I am the all devouring Death. I am the source of future beings. Of females I am Kīrti, Śrī, Vāk, Smṛti, Medhā, Dhṛti and Kṣamā (the goddesses) presiding over the qualities Fame, Prosperity (Fortune), Speech, Memory, Intelligence, Steadfastness and Forgiveness respectively. 34

Comment:

'Mṛtyuḥ sarvaharaścāham'—Death has such an uncommon power that after death everything is devoured, nothing remains in memory. Actually it is not death's power, it is the Lord's power.

Had death not possessed this power of forgetfulness, a man must have been very much worried about the relatives of the previous births and he might have been attached to the persons and things with whom he had affinity in the previous births.

'Udbhavaśca bhaviṣyatām'—As Lord is the sustainer of all beings, He is the source of future beings. It means that it is He Who creates the universe, sustains and destroys it.

'Kīrtiḥ śrīrvākca nārīṇāṁ smṛtirmedhā dhṛtiḥ kṣamā'—These seven women are considered the best of all women in the world. Out of them Kīrti, Smṛti, Medhā, Dhṛti and Kṣamā are daughters of Prajāpati Dakṣa, Śrī is the daughter of sage Bhṛgu and Vāk is Brahmā's daughter. Fame, Prosperity (Fortune), Speech, Memory, Intelligence, Steadfastness and Forgiveness are also the seven well known female qualities.

A person achieves fame because of the virtues. Prosperity can be wealth, property and cattle such as cows, horses, camels and elephants etc.

Speech enables a man to be called a learned person. Remembrance of something is memory.

Intelligence enables a man to fix something in the mind. Steadfastness means not to deviate from one's principles and beliefs etc.

Forgiveness is the quality of forgiving the offender by forgetting the wrong done, in spite of having the capacity and the opportunity to avenge the wrong done to him.

The first three of these qualities are revealed outwardly while the next four are revealed inside beings. The Lord has named them as His divine glories.

So if these qualities are seen anywhere in any being, a striver should think of the Lord by thinking those qualities as the Lord's. If a striver finds them in himself, he should think them as the Lord's, not as his own because they are divine traits which emanate only from the Lord. If a person considers them his own, he feels proud of himself; and pride is a demoniac propensity which leads to a down-fall.

Strivers should regard these excellences and qualities as the Lord's just like Kāka-bhuśuṇḍi who by sage Lomaśa's curse was turned from Brāhmaṇa (the Priest class) to an untouchable bird, crow. But he was neither afraid nor displeased; he was rather pleased because he thought that it was the Lord's will (Mānasa 7/113/1). Thus if a striver starts beholding the Lord in all things, incidents, circumstances and creatures etc., it will lead him to bliss.

बृहत्साम तथा साम्नां गायत्री छन्दसामहम् ।
मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहमृतूनां कुसुमाकरः ॥ ३५ ॥

bṛhatsāma tathā sāmnāṁ gāyatrī chandasāmaham
māsānāṁ mārgaśīrṣo'hamṛtūnāṁ kusumākaraḥ

Of the Sāma hymns I am Bṛhatsāma; of vedic verses, I am Gāyatrī. Of the twelve months of the Hindu calendar I am Mārgaśīrṣa and of seasons I am the flowery spring. 35

Comment:

'Bṛhatsāma tathā sāmnāṁ'— Bṛhatsāma is a psalm in the Sāmaveda, devoted to the praise of God under the name of Indra. In 'Atirātrayāga' it is a 'Pṛsthastotra' (endorsed hymn). This is regarded as the most prominent and best of psalms in the Sāmaveda. So the Lord speaks of it as His divine glory.*

'Gāyatrī chandasāmaham'—The Gāyatrī is the most important of all the metres contained in the Vedas. The Gāyatrī is said to be the mother of the Vedas because the Vedas have emanated from it. It consists of the trio of God—His form, His prayer and meditation on Him. Therefore its chanting leads a striver to God-Realization. So the Lord Speaks of it as His very self.

'Māsānāṁ mārgaśīrṣo'ham'—The crop which supplies food to the people is harvested in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa. Religious sacrifice is also performed with the newly harvested crop in this month. In the days of the Mahābhārata the new year commenced with this month. Hence the Lord declares it to be His divine glory.

'Ṛtūnāṁ kusumākaraḥ'—In the spring season the life of the plant kingdom gets reanimated with fresh leaves and flowers even without water. The weather is neither too hot nor too cold. So the Lord declares it to be His divine glory.

Whatever excellence in these divine glories is observed, is the Lord's. So a striver should think only of the Lord in all the divine glories.

द्यूतं छलयतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ।
जयोऽस्मि व्यवसायोऽस्मि सत्त्वं सत्त्ववतामहम् ॥ ३६ ॥

dyūtaṁ chalayatāmasmi tejastejasvināmaham
jayo'smi vyavasāyo'smi sattvaṁ sattvavatāmaham

I am gambling of the deceitful practices; I am the glory of the glorious. I am the victory of the victorious, the resolution of the resolute; the goodness of the good. 36

Comment:

'Dyūtaṁ chalayatāmasmi'—The game of chance played for money, property or kingdom etc., is called gembling. The Lord has called it His divine glory.

Question:—If gambling is the Lord's divine glory, it means that there is no harm in gambling and then it should be justified. But then why is it forbidden according to the ordinance of the scriptures ?

Answer:—In this context there is the description of the Lord's divine glories, not of sanction and prohibition. Arjuna put the question, "In what various aspects are you to be thought of by me ?" So the Lord is answering his question by telling him that he should think of Him only whatever he beholds in the form of His divine glories, because He declares, "All this universe is Pervaded by Me" (Gītā 9/4).

* In the twenty-second verse the Lord declared Sāmaveda to be His divine glory while here he declares Bṛhatsāma to be his divine glory.

Suppose a striver in the past had the habit of gambling. Now he is busy with adoration. By chance he is reminded of gambling. So he should think of God in it. Thus by beholding the Lord in gambling and the loss and gain involved in it, a striver will think only of the Lord.

The man (soul) is a fragment of the Lord but by error he has assumed his affinity with the body and the world. If he beholds all the excellences and the glories in the world as the Lord's and thinks of Him, it will lead him to God-Realization (Gītā 8/14). On the other hand if he regards the glories as belonging to the world and thinks of the world, it will lead him to complete ruin (Gītā 2/62-63). So these glories have been described so that a striver by thinking of the Lord may know Him in reality.

'Tejastejasvināmaham'—Tejas is the glory or splendour of the great souls who possess divine traits. Before the great men who possess this glory, even the sinners hesitate to commit sins. It has been said as the Lord's divine glory.

'Jayo'smi'—Everyone likes victory. This victory is the glory of the Lord.

A striver should not enjoy the pleasure of his victory by regarding it as the manifestation of his power but he should regard it as the manifestation of the Lord.

'Vyavasāyo'smi'—The resolution or determination is the Lord's divine glory. A lot of importance has been attached to it in the Gītā, "The determination is one pointed" (2/41); "Those who are deeply attached to pleasure and worldly prosperity don't have the determinate intellect" (2/44); "Even if the vilest sinner worships Me with exclusive devotion, he should be considered a saint for he has rightly resolved" (9/30).

A striver should not regard this resolution (determination) as his virtue but should consider it the Lord's glory which he could cultivate only by His grace.

'Sattvaṁ sattvavatāmaham'—The goodness of the good persons is the Lord's glory. The quality of Sattva (Goodness) which prevails suppressing Rājasa (Physical attribute) (passion) and Tāmasa (Darkness attribute) (ignorance) should not be regarded by a striver as his own but as the Lord's.

All the virtues and achievements such as glory, victory, resolution and goodness really belong to the Lord. So a striver instead of considering them his own, should consider them the Lord's and so he should think of Him only.

वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनञ्जयः ।
मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः कवीनामुशना कविः ॥ ३७ ॥

vṛṣṇīnāṁ vāsudevo'smi pāṇḍavānāṁ dhanañjayaḥ
munīnāmapyahaṁ vyāsaḥ kavīnāmuśanā kaviḥ

Among the members of the Vṛṣṇī clan, I am Kṛṣṇa; among the Pāṇḍavas, Dhanañjaya; among the sages I am Vyāsa and among the seers I am the sage Śukra. 37

Comment:

'Vṛṣṇīnāṁ vāsudevo'smi'—Here there is no description of Lord Krsna as an incarnation, but as the best member of the Vṛṣṇī clan. All the divine glories in this chapter have been described from the worldly view-point. In fact they are all manifestations of the Lord.

'Pāṇḍavānāṁ dhanañjayaḥ'—What ever distinction Arjuna, the Lord's dear friend possesses is the Lord's. So the Lord declares him to be His very self.

'Munīnāmapyahaṁ vyāsaḥ'—It was sage Vyāsa who compiled the Vedas and divided them into four parts. The Mahābhārata, the eighteen celebrated

Purāṇas and other scriptures were written by him. He is known as the guide to the modern authors. Any new treatise is said to be the polluted one. It means it contains some portion which has already been included in Vedavyāsa's works. Being the most important of all sages, he has been declared by the Lord as His divine glory. So a striver should think of the Lord because all this distinction in him is the Lord's.

'Kavīnām uśanā kaviḥ'—The term 'Kavi' stands for the learned men who know the scriptural principles well. Śukrācārya was the foremost of the learned. He was expert in the science of reviving the dead. He is known for his science of ethics. Because of his virtues and learning he has been declared to be the very self of the Lord.

Whatever distinction a striver comes across should be regarded as the imperishable Lord's not of the perishable world.

दण्डो दमयतामस्मि नीतिरस्मि जिगीषताम्।
मौनं चैवास्मि गुह्यानां ज्ञानं ज्ञानवतामहम्॥ ३८॥

daṇḍo damayatāmasmi nītirasmi jigīṣatām
maunaṁ caivāsmi guhyānāṁ jñānaṁ jñānavatāmaham

I am the ruling-power (punishment) in rulers; I am righteousness in those who seek victory. Of secrets I am silence and I am wisdom of the wise. 38

Comment:

'Daṇḍo damayatāmasmi'—Just punishment is necessary for a convict to deter him from the sinful conduct and to enable him to follow the right conduct. So the Lord has declared it to be His divine glory.

'Nītirasmi jigīṣatām'—It is righteousness by which one gains a victory, and again it is righteousness which makes the victory everlasting. So the Lord declares it to be His divine glory.

'Maunaṁ caivāsmi guhyānām'—Out of all the secrets, silence is important because every person can't know the feelings of those who keep silent. So the Lord speaks of it as His divine glory.

'Jñānaṁ jñānavatāmaham'—Whatever knowledge or wisdom the wisemen have is the Lord's divine glory.

So whatever distinction is perceived anywhere is not personal but divine. So a striver should always behold the Lord in all the divine glories.

यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन।
न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम्॥ ३९॥*

yaccāpi sarvabhūtānāṁ bījaṁ tadahamarjuna
na tadasti vinā yatsyānmayā bhūtaṁ carācaram

O Arjuna, I am the seed of all beings. There is no creature, animate or inanimate that can exist without Me. 39

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* The Lord from the twentieth verse to the thirty-ninth verse has described His eighty-two divine glories—four in each of twentieth, twenty-first, twenty-second, twenty-third verses, three in the twenty-fourth verse four in the twenty-fifth, four in the twenty-sixth, three in the twenty-seventh, four in each of the twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth, thirtieth and thirty-first verses, five in the thirty-second, four in the thirty-third, nine in the thirty-fourth, four in the thirty-fifth, five in the thrity-sixth, four in the thirty-seventh, and thirty-eighth each and one in the thirty-ninth verse.

Comment:

'Yaccāpi sarvabhūtānāṁ bījaṁ tadahamarjuna'—Here the Lord gives. The gist of all His divine glories by declaring that He is the seed or the cause of the entire animate or the inanimate creation. By the term 'seed' He means to say that He is the efficient cause as well as the material cause of the entire creation. In other words it can be said that He Himself is the creator as well as the creation.

In the tenth verse of the seventh chapter the Lord declares Himself 'the eternal seed', in the eighteenth verse of the ninth chapter 'the imperishable seed' and in this verse only 'seed'. It means that He in spite of remaining the same manifests Himself as the entire universe; and in spite of His manifestation in the form of the world. He remains the same.

'Na tadasti vinā yatsyānmayā bhūtaṁ carācaram'—In the universe whatever creature animate or inanimate, moving or unmoving is seen can't exist without the Lord. All of them originate from Him i.e., He is manifest in all of them. By knowing this fact a striver should think alone of God in whatever he sees and whatever comes to his mind and intellect.

Here the Lord declares that there is no creature, animate or inanimate that can exist without Him while in the fortieth verse of the eighteenth chapter He declares that there is no existence which is free from the three modes (Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika) born of Matter (Nature). The reason is that here is the context of the Discipline of Devotion. Arjuna put the question, "In what various aspects are You to be thought of by me ?" The Lord answers, "I exist in all the forms which come to your mind." But (in 18/40) there is the context of the Discipline of Knowledge in which a striver should discrimate between Matter (Prakṛti) and soul. A striver should renounce his bijaṁ affinity with Matter. The entire universe consists of the three modes born of Matter (Nature). So the Lord there declares that there is no existence which is free from the three modes born of Matter (Nature).

An Important Fact

In this chapter the Lord has recounted His eighty-two divine glories from the tenth to the thirty-ninth verses. His purpose in describing them is not to mention that they are superior or mediocre or inferior, rather He wants to draw attention of the devotees to the fact that whatever comes to their sight or mind, they should think of God only. The Lord while describing his eighty-two glories means to say that a striver should think of God only whatever thing or circumstance or person he comes across*, because Arjuna put the question in which aspects He was to be thought of by him (Gītā 10/17). So the Lord has described His divine glories in brief here. Similarly in the Śrīmadbhāgavata also (in the sixteenth chapter of the eleventh canto) Lord Kṛṣṇa has described His divine glories to Uddhava. Some of the divine glories described in the Gītā and the Śrīmadbhāgavata are similar while some of them dissimilar. In the Gītā He declares that among priests, He is Bṛhaspati (10/24) while in the Bhāgavata He declares that among priests He is Vasiṣṭha (11/16/22). Now the question rises why the same speaker, Lord Kṛṣṇa makes this difference. The answer is that Lord Kṛṣṇa while describing His divine glories does not mean to attach importance to a thing or a person etc., but He wants to say that a striver should think only of the Lord whatever thing or person he comes across physically or mentally. Therefore whatever distinction appears in any object or person should be regarded only as the Lord's.

Link:—Now in the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa concludes the topic by revealing that there is no end of His divine glories.

* Lord Nārāyaṇa pervades the entire universe, which is seen or heard, externally and internally.

नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परंतप ।
एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया ॥ ४० ॥

nānto'sti mama divyānāṁ vibhūtīnāṁ paraṁtapa
eṣa tūddeśataḥ prokto vibhūtervistaro mayā

O harasser of foes, there is no end of My divine glories; this is only a brief description by Me of the extent of My glories. 40

Comment:

'Mam divyānāṁ* vibhūtīnām'—The term 'Divya' stands for singularity or uncommonness. If a striver thinks of the Lord only in whatever circumstances he is or wherever he is, that singularity or divinity is revealed to him because there is no one else as singular and divine as the Lord. The gods who are called divine are also always eager to behold the Lord (Gītā 11/52). It proves that the Lord is the most divine. So His glories are also divine. But the divinity of these glories is revealed to the striver only when he has the only goal to realize God and he, being free from attachment and aversion, thinks only of Him in order to know the reality of Divinity.

'Nānto'sti'—There is no end of the Lord's divine glories. As the Lord himself is endless, so are His glories, virtues, sports and discourses etc. Therefore the Lord, while beginning His divine glories and while concluding them, has said that there is no end of His divine glories. In the Śrīmadbhāgavata also about His glories He says that He can count the number of atoms with the passage of time but He, Who has created millions of universes, can't count His divine glories.

The Lord is endless, limitless and bottomless i.e., He is beyond the limit of time and space.

'Eṣa tūddeśataḥ prokto vibhūtervistaro mayā'—The Lord describes His divine glories in detail from the view-point of Arjuna. But from His view-point this description is very brief because His glories are endless.

[In this chapter some of the glories of the Lord have been described. There may be other glories which have not been described here but they can be related to the strivers. Therefore whatsoever attracts the mind of the striver should be regarded as the Lord's divine glory whether it has been described here or not and he should think only of Him.]

Link:–In the eighteenth verse Arjuna requested Lord Kṛṣṇa to describe His glories and power of Yoga. Having described His divine glories, now He describes His power of Yoga in the next verse.

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोंऽशसंभवम् ॥ ४१ ॥

yadyadvibhūtimatsattvaṁ śrīmadūrjitameva vā
tattadevāvagaccha tvaṁ mama tejoṁ'śasaṁbhavam

Every such thing as is glorious, brilliant or powerful, know that to be a manifestation of a spark of My splendour. 41

* Arjuna first asked Lord Kṛṣṇa to tell him His divine glories (11/16). So Lord Kṛṣṇa while starting the description said that He would tell him His divine glories (10/19) and while concluding the topic he again tells Arjuna that there is no end of His divine glories (10/40). Thus the term 'divine' has been used in the question as well as in the beginning and conclusion of the answer.

Comment:

'Yadyadvibhūtimatsattvaṁ śrīmadūrjitameva vā'—Whatever glory, brilliance, power, beauty or any other singularity appears in animate or inanimate things and persons etc., should be known as a manifestation of a spark of the Lord's splendour—**'tattadevāvagaccha tvaṁ mama tejoṁ'śasaṁbhavam'**. Without Him there is no singularity anywhere.

Therefore whatever speciality a person observes, he should regard it as the Lord's and so he should think of Him only. If he thinks that the speciality is of a person or a thing etc., he has a downfall. If a chaste wife observes something special in any other person except her husband, her chastity gets polluted. Similarly if a devotee perceives any singularity anywhere else except God, his exclusive devotion is polluted.

Whatever beauty or glory or attraction or power or any other quality appears in an object or a being is only the Lord's. How? If it had been of a person or a thing, it might have remained there for ever. But it is not so. Then whose is it? It is of the Lord Who is the illuminator, the origin and the base of all of them. One, who regards it as of the person or the thing, gets entangled in the world and gains nothing. But if he after a serious thought comes to know the fact that the objects and persons that are perishable can't possess those qualities, they are only the Lord's, he attains bliss.

As the electric current works our radio but an ignorant person may regard the sound coming only from the radio without attaching any importance to the electric current while a person having knowledge of it knows that the radio works by electric power. Similarly an ignorant person may regard the speciality of a person and an object as theirs but a wise man regards it as the Lord's.

In the eighth verse of this chapter the Lord declared that He is the source of all the creation and from him all things evolve. It means that whatever glory, brilliance, power or any other speciality is seen, is the Lord's. Once a saint heard a prostitute singing a song with a melodious voice. He cried, "Oh ! What a melody bestowed upon her by the Lord !" Thus the saint instead of paying attention to the prostitute, paid attention to the glory of the Lord. Therefore wherever any beauty or excellence or quality or speciality appears, should be regarded as the Lord's. But it does not mean that we should not feel thankful to those who have done good to us with their qualities. We should be grateful to them and we should render service to them. But we should not get entangled in the world by regarding them as theirs.

An Important Fact

While describing His divine glories from the twentieth verse to the thirty-ninth verse the Lord has used the term 'Asmi' (I) several times to lay emphasis on the fact that He is the origin of all the divine glories. He has used the term 'Viddhi' (Know) two times, once in the twenty-fourth verse and the second time in the twenty-seventh verse and 'Avagaccha' (Know) in the forty-first verse.

The term 'Viddhi' (Know) has been used two times to make us cautious. A man becomes cautious by knowledge and by ruling power. A preceptor imparts knowledge while a king rules with his ruling power. In the twenty-fourth verse the Lord mentions the name of preceptor Bṛhaspati. It means that the people should know the reality about His divine glories through the preceptor. That knowledge will lead them to unwavering devotion (Gītā 10/7). In the twenty-seventh verse the Lord by mentioning the king as His divine glory means to convey that we through the ruling power of the king should follow the right path viz., make our life pure. To explain something a preceptor applies his love while a king applies his power. A preceptor wants his disciples to attain salvation while a king wants his subjects to obey the rules of the country.

The terms 'Uccaiḥśravā' and 'Airāvata' in the twenty-seventh verse denote prosperity of the king. So the term 'Viddhi' (Know) in this verse specially seems to be used for the king.

The term 'Avagaccha' (Know) used in this verse means to know the reality that whatever distinction is observed in the universe is only the Lord's.

Thus by giving the term 'Viddhi' two times and 'Avagaccha' once, the Lord means to say that so long as a person does not carry out the orders of the preceptor and the king and try to understand the reality, the knowledge imparted by the preceptor and the ruling power of the king will be of no avail for him. If he himself carries out their orders and knows the reality, then and then only it can be useful for him.

Link:–Having answered Arjuna's question now in the next verse the Lord Himself reveals an important fact.

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन ।
विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥ ४२ ॥

athavā bahunaitena kiṁ jñātena tavārjuna
viṣṭabhyāhamidaṁ kṛtsnamekāṁśena sthito jagat

Or what need is there, O Arjuna, for the detailed knowledge ? I stand supporting the whole universe with a single fragment of Myself. 42

Comment:

'Athavā'—This term suggests something different from what has been stated already. By this term the Lord means to say that He has already answered his question. Now He wants to tell him something remarkable of His own accord.

'Bahunaitena kiṁ jñātena tavārjuna'—Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "O brother Arjuna ! What need is there to know all this in detail ? Though I am sitting before you as a chariot driver with horses' bridle and a whip in My hands to carry out your order, yet I hold countless universes in both the states of new creation and final dissolution in a fragment of My body."

'Viṣṭabhyāhamidaṁ kṛtsnamekāṁśena sthito jagat'—The Lord means to say that He stands holding the countless universes in a fragment of His body through His Yogic power. But it does not mean that that fragment is occupied by countless universes and so that fragment is not empty. That fragment is still empty. As with our intellect we know several languages, scripts and art etc., but it does not mean that there is no more room in it to know more languages and scripts etc. We can learn several other languages, scripts and arts etc., with it. When even our intellect, a small fragment of Matter, is not filled with the knowledge of different languages etc., how can a fragment of the Lord, Who is transcendental, endless, limitless and bottomless, be filled with countless universes ?

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे विभूतियोगो नाम दशमोऽध्यायः ॥ १० ॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ
yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde vibhūtiyogo nāma daśamo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ Tat, Sat, the names of the Lord, in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavadgītā, the knowledge of Brahma, the Supreme, the science of Yoga

and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, this is the tenth discourse designated:

"The Yoga of Divine Glories."

Words, letters and Uvāca (said) in the Tenth Chapter

(1) In this chapter in **'Atha daśamo'-dhāyaḥ'** there are three words, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are six words and in verses there are five hundred and fifty-six words and there are thirteen concluding words. Thus the total number of the words is five hundred and seventy-eight.

(2) In **'Atha daśamo'dhyāyaḥ'** there are seven letters, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are twenty letters, in verses there are one thousand three hundred and forty-four letters and there are forty-six concluding letters. Thus the total of the letters is one thousand, four hundred and seventeen. Each of the verses in this chapter consists of thirty-two letters.

(3) In this chapter there are three **'Uvāca'** — two **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** and one **'Arjuna Uvāca.'**

Metres Used in the Tenth Chapter

In this chapter out of the forty-two verses in the first quarter of the second and twenty-fifth verses 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'na-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the seventh verse and third quarter of the fifth and thirty-second verses 'ma-gaṇa' being used there is **'ma-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the eighth verse and third quarter of the twenty-sixth verse 'bha-gaṇa' being used there is **'bha-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the sixth verse 'ra-gaṇa' being used there is **'ra-vipulā'** metre. The remaining thirty-six verses are possessed of the characteristics of right **'pathyāvaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

Śrī Hariḥ

ELEVENTH CHAPTER

Introduction

At the end of the tenth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa graciously said to Arjuna, "I hold countless universes in a fragment of My body and yet I am sitting before you as a chariot driver with horses' bridle and a whip in my hands and carrying out your order. I am the base of all the divine glories and influence (Yoga) and when I am sitting before you, what need is there for you to have the detailed knowledge of My divine glories?" After listening to the statement of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna thinks of His special grace and being wonder-struck speaks.

अर्जुन उवाच

मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसंज्ञितम्।
यत्त्वयोक्तं वचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम ॥ १ ॥*

arjuna uvāca

madanugrahāya paramaṁ guhyamadhyātmasaṁjñitam
yattvayoktaṁ vacastena moho'yaṁ vigato mama

Arjuna said:

By This profound discourse concerning the self (spiritual wisdom) which you have delivered out of compassion for me, my delusion has been dispelled. 1

Comment:

'Madanugrahāya'—The Lord out of grace declared, "Out of compassion, for those who worship Me, I destroy the ignorance — born darkness" (Gītā 10/11). Arjuna was very much influenced by His statement. So he offered praises to Him (10/12—15) and told Him that it was only out of compassion that He revealed to him His closely guarded secret.†

'Paramaṁ guhyam'—The Lord after describing His important divine glories at the end of the tenth chapter told him of his own accord that He stood supporting the whole universe with a single fragment of his self (10/42). Arjuna regards this fact as the supreme secret.

'Adhyātmasaṁjñitam'—In the seventh verse of the tenth chapter the Lord declares that he who knows in reality His divine glories and Yoga-power (viz., He is the origin of all the divine glories and again those divine glories merge in Him) is endowed with unfaltering Yoga of devotion. This has been called by Arjuna 'Adhyātma saṁjñitaṁ' (spiritual wisdom)‡.

'Yattvayoktaṁ vacastena moho'yaṁ vigato mama'—Arjuna's delusion was that he did not know that the Lord holds the entire universe in a fragment of His body. But when the Lord explained the fact to him he came to know His singularity that though countless universes emanate from a fragment of His body, they remain established in it and again merge in it, yet He remains the same. Arjuna said that his delusion§ was dispelled but the Lord knew that his delusion was not dispelled. So again in the forty-ninth verse the Lord says to Arjuna, "Be neither perturbed nor deluded."

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* After thinking of the unusual grace of the Lord on him Arjuna was overwhelmed with joy. So without keeping in mind the rule he spoke this verse of thirty-three letters instead of thirty-two because when a man is beside himself, he is likely to forget the rule.

† Whatever Lord Krsna explained to Arjuna in the Gītā from the beginning to this stage was out of compassion only because all His actions are full of His grace but a man does not realize this fact. When a man realizes His grace, he attains Divinity very easily and quickly. When Arjuna realizes His grace, he being overwhelmed with joy tells Him that it is by His grace that his delusion is destroyed.

‡ Whatever has been said by the Lord about devotion so far, is the supreme-secret-spiritual gospel.

§ A man does not know delusion so long as he has it. But he knows it only when it is dispelled.

Link:–How Arjuna's delusion was dispelled, is explained by him in the next verse.

भवाप्ययौ हि भूतानां श्रुतौ विस्तरशो मया ।
त्वत्तः कमलपत्राक्ष माहात्म्यमपि चाव्ययम् ॥ २ ॥

bhavāpyayau hi bhūtānāṁ śrutau vistaraśo mayā
tvattaḥ kamalapatrākṣa māhātmyamapi cāvyayam

From You, O lotus-eyed, I have heard in detail an account of the origin and dissolution of beings and also Your immortal glory. 2

Comment:

'Bhavāpyayau hi bhūtānāṁ śrutau vistaraśo mayā'—The Lord declared, "I am the origin (source) of the entire creation and in Me again it dissolves. There is no other source besides Me" (Gītā 7/6-7); "Whatever beings there are, born of Sattva, of Rajas or of Tamas, know them all as evolved from Me alone"(7/12); "Diverse feelings of creatures emanate from Me alone" (10/4-5); "I am the source of all creation; every thing in the world moves because of Me" (10/8); "I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings" (10/20); and "I am the beginning and the end and also the middle of all creations" (10/32). So Arjuna says that he has heard in detail an account of the origin and dissolution of beings. He means to say that all the beings evolve from Him, live in Him and merge in Him i.e. He is all in all.

'Māhātmyamapi cāvyayam'—Arjuna wants to say that he also heard His immortal glory explained by Him in the seventh verse of the tenth chapter that he who knows in reality His divine power and glory is endowed with unfaltering Yoga of devotion.

The Lord's glory has been called immortal because after knowing His divine glory and power in reality, one is endowed with devotion which is immortal because the Lord Himself is immortal, so the devotion for Him should also be immortal.

Link:–In the next two verses Arjuna requests Lord Kṛṣṇa to vouchsafe a vision of His Cosmic Form.

एवमेतद्यथात्थ त्वमात्मानं परमेश्वर ।
द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरं पुरुषोत्तम ॥ ३ ॥

evametadyathāttha tvamātmānaṁ parameśvara
draṣṭumicchāmi te rūpamaiśvaraṁ puruṣottama

O Lord Supreme, You are precisely what You have declared Yourself to be. But I long to see Your divine form, O best of persons. 3

Comment:

'Puruṣottama'—Arjuna addresses the Lord as the best (Supreme) person because no other person is equal to Him. The same fact has been pointed out by the Lord Himself in the fifteenth chapter when He declares," I am beyond perishable Matter and superior to the imperishable soul. Therefore I am known in the world and in the Vedas as the Supreme Person" (15/18).

'Evametadyathāttha tvamātmānam'—Arjuna means to say that whatever has been spoken by the Lord about His virtues, glories and divine powers (from the seventh to the tenth chapters) is wholly true without any doubt.

The Lord declares, "I am the origin of the entire creation and in Me again it dissolves" (7/6), "It has no other source besides Me" (7/7), "All is God" (7/19), "I am Brahma (the

Infinite), Adhyātma (Self), action, Adhibhūta (Matter), Adhidaiva (Brahmā, the creator) and Adhiyajña (the Unmanifest Divinity)" (7/29-30). "I am the Supreme Person who is attainable by exclusive devotion" (8/22), "All this universe is pervaded by Me but I don't dwell in the beings nor do the beings dwell in Me" (9/4-5);"I am being and non-being both" (9/19); "I am the source of all creation and everything in the world moves because of Me" (10/8) and "I support the whole universe with a single fragment of Myself" (10/42) etc. Arjuna says that whatever has been said by Him is wholly true.

'Parameśvara'—Arjuna heard Lord Kṛṣṇa say, "I am Lord of all beings"(4/6); "I am the Supreme Lord of all the worlds" (5/29). So Arjuna addresses Him as the Lord Supreme because He is the Supreme Lord of the entire creation.

'Draṣṭumicchāmi te rūpamaiśvaram'—Arjuna tells Lord Kṛṣṇa that after hearing His immortal glory, he has a firm belief in His words; and after hearing the words that He supports the entire universe with a single fragment of His self, he has developed an irresistible yearning to see His Cosmic Form.

Secondly Arjuna means to say that He is the Supreme Ruler of all the universes and yet it is very kind of Him to love him so much, to act as he wishes and to answer whatever he asks. It is because of His extraordinary kindness to him that he has developed an irresistible yearning to see that form in whose single fragment He holds supporting the entire universe.

In the sixteenth verse of the tenth chapter Arjuna requested Lord Kṛṣṇa to describe in full His divine glories. In response to his question Lord Kṛṣṇa while describing His divine glories, in the beginning and at the end told him that there was no end of His divine glories (10/19,40). So He gave only a brief description. But here Arjuna requests Him to show Him His divine form (only one) but Lord Kṛṣṇa says to him,"Behold in hundreds and thousands My multifarious divine forms" (11/5). As in this mortal world if a greedy person demands a lot frankly from some donor, he gets only a little; but if he demands a little hesitatingly, the donor gives more. Similarly first Arjuna requested the Lord to describe His divine glories in detail, so He described in brief. But here Arjuna becomes cautious and hesitatingly prays to Lord Kṛṣṇa to reveal that form to him if He deems it fit. The Lord is influenced by this hesitating mood and asks him to behold His multifarious divine form in hundreds and thousands.

Secondly Lord Kṛṣṇa while sitting on the seat in Arjuna's chariot said, "In a part of this body of Mine the entire creation (having infinite universes) pervades." So Arjuna developed an irresistible yearning to see that form of his.

मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो ।
योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम् ॥ ४ ॥

manyase yadi tacchakyaṁ mayā draṣṭumiti prabho
yogeśvara tato me tvaṁ darśayātmānamavyayam

If You, O Lord, think that this Cosmic Form can be seen by me, then, O Lord of Yoga, reveal to me Your imperishable form. 4

Comment:

'Prabho'—The term 'Prabho' means Omnipotent. Arjuna uses this vocative 'Prabho' for Lord Kṛṣṇa to indicate that He is Omnipotent. So even if he is not able, the Lord by His grace and power can enable him to have a vision of His divine form.

'Manyase yadi tacchakyaṁ mayā draṣṭumiti'—Arjuna says to Lord Kṛṣṇa that even if He does not reveal His divine form to him, he will believe His words that His form is the same as He has described but he is not qualified and deserving to behold it. Thus Arjuna does not doubt the

Lord's statement in the least rather he has full faith in it. So he prays to Him to reveal to him His divine form if He thinks it possible for him to see it.

'Yogeśvara'—By using the address 'Yogeśvara' Arjuna means to say that He is the Lord of all the Yogas (Disciplines) such as the Disciplines of Devotion, of Action, of Meditation, of Knowledge etc. So by His power He can enable him to behold His divine Cosmic Form.

Arjuna in the seventeenth verse of the tenth chapter used the term 'Yogin' but now he uses the term 'Yogeśvara' (the Lord of Yoga) i.e., the Master of all the Yogas because now there is a lot of change in his attitude towards the Lord.

'Tato me tvam darśayātmānamavyayam'—Arjuna prays to Lord Kṛṣṇa to reveal to him His imperishable form from which infinite universes emanate, in which they remain established and in which they again merge.

Link:–After listening to Arjuna's humble prayer the Lord asks him to behold His Cosmic Form.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

पश्य मे पार्थ रूपाणि शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ।
नानाविधानि दिव्यानि नानावर्णाकृतीनि च ॥ ५ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca
paśya me pārtha rūpāṇi śataśo'tha sahasraśaḥ
nānāvidhāni divyāni nānāvarṇākṛtīni ca

The Blessed Lord said:

Behold My forms, O Pārtha (Arjuna), by hundreds and thousands, multifarious and divine, of various colours and shapes. 5

Comment:

'Paśya me pārtha rūpāṇi śataśo'tha sahasraśaḥ'—Listening to the humble and hesitating prayer of Arjuna, the Lord was very much pleased with him. So He addressing him as 'Pārtha' (the son of Pṛthā, Kuntī) asks him to behold His forms by hundreds and thousands i.e., innumerable forms. Thus the Lord explains that as His divine glories are infinite so are His forms.

'Nānāvidhāni divyāni nānāvarṇākṛtīni ca'—Now the Lord describes the characteristics of those forms. They were heterogeneous in character consisting of different shapes, colours and sizes.

As a particle of the earth is the earth in miniature, this world, being, fragment of the Lord having a Cosmic Form, is nothing besides the Lord. But it is not manifest to all in its divine form, it is manifest only in its world-form. It is so because a man instead of beholding the Lord beholds only the perishable world. As the Lord even in incarnation is not manifest to all (Gītā 7/25), He appears only as a common man to all; similarly the Cosmic Form of the Lord is seen as the world by an ordinary man. Here the Lord by revealing Himself in His divine imperishable Cosmic Form calls upon Arjuna to behold His divine forms.

Link:–In the previous verse the Lord called upon Arjuna to behold His Cosmic Form of various colours and shapes. Now in the next verse He asks Arjuna to behold the gods and other wonders in His body.

पश्यादित्यान्वसून्रुद्रानश्विनौ मरुतस्तथा ।
बहून्यदृष्टपूर्वाणि पश्याश्चर्याणि भारत ।। ६ ।।

paśyādityānvasūnrudrānaśvinau marutastathā
bahūnyadṛṣṭapūrvāṇi paśyāścaryāṇi bhārata

Behold in Me, O Bhārata, the twelve sons of Aditi, the eight Vasus the eleven Rudras (gods of destruction), the two Aśvinīkumāras (the twin born physicians of gods) and the forty-nine Maruts (wind gods) and see many more marvels never seen before. 6

Comment:

'Paśyādityānvasūnrudrānaśvinau marutastathā'—The twelve sons of Aditi are—Dhātā, Mitra, Aryamā, Śakra, Varuṇa, Aṁśa, Bhaga, Vivasvān, Pūṣā, Savitā, Tvaṣṭā and Viṣṇu (Mahā. Ādi. 65/15-16).

The eight vasus are — Dhara, Dhruva, Soma, Ahaḥ, Anila, Anala, Pratyūṣa and Prabhāsa (Mahā. Ādi. 66/18).

The eleven Rudras are — Hara, Bahurūpa, Tryambaka, Aparājita, Vṛsākapi, Śambhu, Kapardī, Raivata, Mṛgavyādha, Śarva and Kapālī (Harivaṁśa. 1/3/51-52).

Aśvinīkumāras are the twin born physicians of gods. The forty-nine Maruts (wind-gods) are — Sattvajyoti, Āditya, Satyajyoti, Tiryagjyoti, Sajyoti, Jyotiṣmān, Harita, Ṛtajit, Satyajit, Suṣeṇa, Senajit, Satyamitra, Abhimitra, Harimitra, Kṛta, Satya, Dhruva, Dhartā, Vidhartā, Vidhāraya, Dhvānta, Dhuni, Ugra, Bhīma, Abhiyu, Sākṣipa, Īdṛk, Anyādṛk, Yādṛk, Pratikṛt, Ṛk, Samiti, Saṁrambha, Īdṛkṣa, Puruṣa, Anyādṛkṣa, Cetasa, Samitā, Samidṛkṣa, Pratidṛkṣa, Maruti, Sarata, Deva, Diśa, Yajuḥ, Anudṛk, Sāma, Mānuṣa and Viś (Vāyupurāṇa 67/123—130).

The Lord calls upon Arjuna to behold them all in His Cosmic Form.

These thirty-three varieties of gods are the principal ones. The forty-nine Maruts (wind-gods) are regarded as separate from the thirty-three varieties of gods because they were transformed from demons to gods. So the Lord has separated them from other gods by using the term 'Tathā' (and) (also).

'Bahūnyadṛṣṭapūrvāṇi paśyāścaryāṇi bhārata'—The Lord asks Arjuna to behold such marvels in those forms which he might have neither seen, nor heard, nor imagined, nor thought of. After beholding such forms a person is wonder-struck and aghast.

Link:–After hearing the Lord's order to behold His cosmic form Arjuna may be curious to know where to behold it. So the Lord declares.

इहैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं पश्याद्य सचराचरम् ।
मम देहे गुडाकेश यच्चान्यद्द्रष्टुमिच्छसि ।। ७ ।।

ihaikastham jagatkṛtsnam paśyādya sacarācaram
mama dehe guḍākeśa yaccānyaddraṣṭumicchasi

O Guḍākeśa (Arjuna), now behold within this body of Mine the entire creation consisting of both animate and inanimate beings and whatever else you wish to see. 7

Comment:

'Guḍākeśa'—Arjuna is addressed as 'Guḍākeśa' because he was the conqueror of sleep. The Lord by addressing Arjuna as Guḍākeśa invites him to observe His cosmic form attentively giving up laziness.

'Ihaikastham jagatkṛtsnam paśyādya sacarācaram mama dehe'—

At the end of the tenth chapter the Lord declared that He supports the whole universe with a single fragment of His self. So Arjuna developed a desire to see his cosmic form. Therefore the Lord calls upon Arjuna to behold within a part of His body the entire creation consisting of both animate and inanimate beings while He is sitting before him with horses' bridle and a whip in His hands. The Lord means to say that in His body wherever he eyes, he will see infinite universes. The word 'Cara' stands for all creatures possessing motion such as men, gods, genies, demons, ghosts, beasts and birds etc., while 'Acara' denotes things devoid of motion such as trees, plants and hills etc. 'Adya' here means now. The Lord means to say that there is no question of any delay for Him to reveal His cosmic form. So He reveals it the moment Arjuna expresses his desire to behold it.

'Yaccānyaddraṣṭumicchasi' — By this expression Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to convey to Arjuna that he can perceive not only the incidents relating to the present but also to the past and the future. Moreover Arjuna had a doubt whether they would win or the Kauravas would win (Gītā 2/6). So Lord Kṛṣṇa asks him to perceive at that moment in a part of His body the scene of his own victory and the enemy's defeat.

An Important Fact

The Lord in the seventh verse of the tenth chapter declared, "He who knows in reality the divine glory and power of Mine is endowed with unfaltering Yoga of devotion." Hearing this statement Arjuna by offering praises and prayer to Him requested Him to describe His divine glories. Similarly by hearing the Lord's statement that He stands supporting the whole universe with a single fragment of His self, Arjuna prays to the Lord to reveal to him His cosmic form. If the Lord had not made this statement, Arjuna would have not prayed to Him to reveal to him His cosmic form. It means that the Lord by His own grace wants to reveal to him His cosmic form.

The same sort of incident occurred when Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa to place his chariot between the two armies. Lord Kṛṣṇa placed the chariot between the two armies in front of Bhīṣma and Droṇa and said, "Arjuna, behold these Kauravas" (1/25). It indicates that the Lord wanted to preach the gospel of the Gītā. If the Lord had not said so and Arjuna had not seen his kinsmen, he might have not grieved and the Lord might have not preached the gospel of the Gītā. It means that the Lord by His grace has preached the gospel of the Gītā of His own accord.

Link:–The Lord in the previous three verses called upon Arjuna to behold His cosmic form four times by using the term 'Paśya' (see). But Arjuna in spite of his best efforts could behold nothing. So the Lord (knowing the cause of Arjuna's failure to see that form) bestowing upon him the gift of divine vision, orders him to behold His cosmic form.

न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा।
दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम्॥ ८॥

na tu māṁ śakyase draṣṭumanenaiva svacakṣuṣā
divyaṁ dadāmi te cakṣuḥ paśya me yogamaiśvaram

But you cannot see Me with these human eyes of yours; therefore I give you the divine eye. With this behold My divine power of Yoga. 8

Comment:

'Na tu mām śakyase draṣṭumanenaiva svacakṣuṣā'—Lord Kṛṣṇa knew that His transcendent form could not be seen with the ordinary human eyes because their power is very meagre and limited and so they can see only the objects of Nature such as men, beasts and birds etc., but they can't behold His form which is beyond the reach of senses, mind and intellect.

'Divyaṁ dadāmi te cakṣuḥ paśya me yogamaiśvaram'—By His power of Yoga the Lord bestowed upon Arjuna the divine faculty in order to enable him to have a vision of the spiritual objects, which were beyond the reach of sense-organs, as well as His cosmic form with his human eyes.

The term, 'Paśya' has two meanings — to see with intellect (discrimination) and to see with eyes. In the fifth verse of the ninth chapter there is the context of seeing with intellect while here is the context of seeing with eyes.

An Important Fact

Suppose the word 'Gītā' is written some where. An illiterate person just sees black marks, a man having knowledge of letters can see letters but an educated person who is a scholar and who has studied the Gītā thoroughly, after having a look at the word 'Gītā' thinks of its chapters, verses and its gospel etc. Similarly when the Lord bestowed upon Arjuna the divine eye, he could see the uncommon cosmic form of the Lord and its divinity which are beyond the power of ordinary intellect.

Now a doubt rises when Arjuna said to Lord Kṛṣṇa in the fourth verse, "If you think that it can be seen by me, then reveal to me Your imperishable form", the Lord should have uttered the eighth verse, "You can't see Me with your human eyes, therefore I give you the divine eye." But the Lord ordered him to behold His cosmic form. But when he was unable to behold that form, the Lord bestowed upon him the divine eye. Why?

The Lord has done so in order to indicate how His grace extends to the strivers by degrees. Actually the Lord is very much gracious. He showers His grace upon His devotees in various strange manners. In the Gītā the Lord, through his preaching, by changing his attitude towards his duty, described His divine glories and aroused curiosity in Arjuna. So by the Lord's inspiration Arjuna prayed to Him to tell Him once more in detail, His power of Yoga and His glories, for he knew no satiety in hearing His nectarean words. Having described His glories the Lord announced that He stood holding the entire universe with a single fragment of His self. So Arjuna prayed to Him to reveal to him His cosmic form with infinite universes. Thus the Lord revealed His cosmic form and ordered Arjuna again and again to behold it. But when Arjuna was unable to behold the cosmic form, the Lord bestowed upon him the divine eye. It means that when a devotee takes refuge in the Lord, He shoulders the whole responsibility of the devotee.

Link:–In the next verse Sañjaya describes to Dhṛtarāṣṭra the nature of the divine cosmic body revealed by the Lord to Arjuna.

सञ्जय उवाच

एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन्महायोगेश्वरो हरिः ।
दर्शयामास पार्थाय परमं रूपमैश्वरम् ॥ ९ ॥

sañjaya uvāca

evamuktvā tato rājanmahāyogeśvaro hariḥ
darśayāmāsa pārthāya paramaṁ rūpamaiśvaram

Sañjaya said:

O King, having spoken thus, the Supreme Lord of Yoga, Hari (Kṛṣṇa) showed to Pārtha (Arjuna) His supreme divine form.* 9

Comment:

'Evamuktvā tato ..... rūpamaiśvaram'—'Evamuktvā' denotes the topic of the preceding verse when the Lord declared, "You can't see Me with your human eyes, therefore I give you the divine eye. With this behold My divine power of Yoga."

In the fourth verse Arjuna addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Lord of Yoga while here Sañjaya addresses Him as the Supreme Lord of Yoga. It means that the Lord revealed His hundreds and thousands of multifarious divine forms while Arjuna wanted to behold only one. If a devotee has a little inclination towards the Lord, He by His limitless power enhances that inclination.

The form which was called by Arjuna in the third verse as divine, has been called by Sañjaya here as supreme divine. It means that the Lord's cosmic form is very uncommon. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the great Lord of all the Yogas reveals such an uncommon singular and wonderful cosmic form that even such a valiant, steady and self-controlled warrior as Arjuna, who has been offered divine vision by the Lord, has to say 'hard to gaze at' (11/17), 'My mind is tormented by fear' (11/45), and the Lord has to console him by asking him to be free from fear (11/49).

Link:–Sañjaya describes the Lord's supreme divine form in the next two verses.

अनेकवक्त्रनयनमनेकाद्भुतदर्शनम् ।
अनेकदिव्याभरणं दिव्यानेकोद्यतायुधम् ॥ १० ॥
दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरं दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम् ।
सर्वाश्चर्यमयं देवमनन्तं विश्वतोमुखम् ॥ ११ ॥

anekavaktranayanamanekādbhutadarśanam
anekadivyābharaṇam divyānekodyatāyudham
divyamālyāmbaradharam divyagandhānulepanam
sarvāścaryamayam devamanantam viśvatomukham

The Supreme Deity possessed many mouths and eyes presenting many a wonderful sight, decked with many divine ornaments, wielding many uplifted divine weapons, wearing divine garlands and clothes, besmeared all over with divine perfumes, all wonderful, infinite with faces on all sides. Such divine cosmic form, the Lord revealed to Arjuna. 10-11

Comment:

'Anekavaktranayanam'—All the mouths and eyes of the Supreme Deity were divine. The mouth, eyes, arms and legs etc., of other beings seen in his cosmic body were also His because He had revealed Himself as the Supreme Deity with His cosmic form.

'Anekādbhutadarśanam'—In the cosmic body of the Lord innumerable strange and marvellous forms, shapes and colours were beheld by Arjuna.

'Anekadivyābharaṇam'—All the ornaments of diverse forms in hands, feet, ears, noses and necks in the cosmic body of the Lord were divine because the Lord revealed Himself as ornaments.

'Divyānekodyatāyudham'— The Lord held in His uplifted hands many divine

* Sañjaya was bestowed upon the divine vision by Vedavyāsa. So he also beheld the Lord's cosmic form (Gītā 18/77). Now Sañjaya, describes this cosmic form to Dhrtarāṣtra.

weapons such as discus, club, bow, arrows and spear etc.

'Divyamālyāmbaradharam'— The Lord in his cosmic form had many divine garlands of flowers, gold, silver, pearls, gems etc., hanging from His neck and was clad in various kinds of divine costumes of red, yellow, green, white, brown and many other colours.

'Divya gandhānulepanam'—The Lord in his cosmic form was besmeared with divine fragrant substances such as musk, sandal and vermillion pastes on His face, head as well as all over his body.

'Sarvāścaryamayaṁ devamanantaṁ viśvato mukham'—The cosmic body revealed by the Lord was infinite and unabounded by space and the innumerable faces forming part of that body were spread on all sides. Everything in the cosmic form was wonderful.

As a man thinks that he is bathing in the Ganges at Haridvāra, though there is neither Haridvāra nor the Ganges, yet his mind forms different images of Haridvāra, the Ganges the bridge and several persons bathing there; similarly the Lord manifested Himself in numberless forms, ornaments, weapons, garlands, clothes and perfumes etc.

It is mentioned in the Śrīmadbhāgavata that when Brahmā, the creator stole the calves and the cow herds of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Lord manifested Himself not only as calves and cowherds but also as canes, horns, flutes, clothes and ornaments (Śrīmadbhāg. 10/13/19).

Link:–In the next verse Sañjaya describes the effulgence of the Lord's cosmic form.

दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता ।
यदि भाः सदृशी सा स्याद्भासस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥ १२ ॥

divi sūryasahasrasya bhavedyugapadutthitā
yadi bhāḥ sadṛśī sā syādbhāsastasya mahātmanaḥ

If there were the effulgence of a thousand suns blazing forth all at once in the sky that would hardly be like the splendour of the mighty Lord. 12

Comment:

'Divi sūryasahasrasya bhavedyugapadutthitā yadi bhāḥ sadṛśī sā syādbhāsastasya mahātmanaḥ'—As the light of thousand stars twinkling together in the sky cannot be compared with the light of the moon and as the light of a thousand moons cannot be compared with the light of the sun, similarly the splendour of a thousand suns shining all at once in the sky can't be like that of the cosmic form of the Lord. It means that the splendour of the Lord was incomparable. The reason is that the effulgence of the sun is material while the splendour of the Lord was divine. So the splendours belonging to two different categories can't be compared, only a hint can be given. Therefore by referring to the brilliance of a thousand suns, Sañjaya is hinting at the effulgence of the cosmic from.

Link:–After describing the Lord's cosmic form and its splendour Sañjaya in the next verse describes that Arjuna beheld the universe in the cosmic form of the Lord.

तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रविभक्तमनेकधा ।
अपश्यद्देवदेवस्य शरीरे पाण्डवस्तदा ॥ १३ ॥

tatraikastham jagatkṛtsnaṁ pravibhaktamanekadhā
apaśyaddevadevasya śarīre pāṇḍavastadā

Then Arjuna, concentrated at one place, in the person of that Supreme Deity, saw the whole universe with its many fold divisions. 13

Comment:

'Tatraikastham jagatkṛtsnam pravibhaktamanekadhā'—Arjuna with the divine eye beheld the entire universe with its many fold divisions such as the gods, human beings, beasts, birds, earth, ocean, sky and stars etc. It means that Arjuna in a part of the body of the Lord beheld the entire universe with animate and inanimate beings divided into different worlds as the world of the gods, the world of human beings and so on.*

'Apaśyaddevadevasya śarīre pāṇḍavastadā' —'Tadā' means that Arjuna saw Lord Krsna's cosmic form as soon as He revealed it. 'Apaśyat' means that Arjuna saw the same form which the Lord revealed to him by bestowing upon him divine vision. Arjuna saw the same cosmic form as has already been described by Sañjaya.

As the world of the gods is superior to this mortal world, so is the Lord far superior to the world of the gods as all the worlds including the paradise, the world of the gods are material while the Lord is beyond Matter. So God is the Lord of the gods.

Link:–Sañjaya in the next verse describes how Arjuna felt after beholding the cosmic form of the Lord.

ततः स विस्मयाविष्टो हृष्टरोमा धनञ्जयः ।
प्रणम्य शिरसा देवं कृताञ्जलिरभाषत ॥ १४ ॥

tataḥ sa vismayāviṣṭo hṛṣṭaromā dhanañjayaḥ
praṇamya śirasā devaṁ kṛtāñjalirabhāṣata

Then Dhanañjaya, struck with wonder, his hair standing on end, bowed his head to the divine Lord and with joined palms addressed Him thus. 14

Comment:

'Tataḥ sa vismayāviṣṭo hṛṣṭaromā dhanañjayaḥ'—Arjuna was over-whelmed with wonder at the sight of the cosmic form of the Lord because he had not even dreamed of such a form, His joy knew no bounds after thinking of the Lord's grace and his hair stood on end.

'Praṇamya śirasā devaṁ kṛtāñjalirabhāṣata'— After perceiving the Lord's uncommon grace Arjuna felt highly grateful to Him and he was so much inspired with a feeling of deep reverence for the Lord that he bowed his head with utmost reverence to the Lord. He thought that he could do nothing more than bowing his head i.e., surrendering himself to Him. So he with joined palms, laying his head at the feet of the Lord began to offer his praises to the Lord possessing cosmic form.

Link:–Arjuna overwhelmed with joy and wonder and describing the sight, which he saw in the Lord's cosmic form, makes the rapturous utterance, offering his praise to Him in the next three verses.

अर्जुन उवाच

पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव देहे
सर्वांस्तथाभूतविशेषसङ्घान् ।

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* In Śrīmadbhāgavata there is an ancedote. Once Yaśodā beheld the Lord's cosmic form in Krsna's small mouth. Think over it that out of infinite universes there is one universe in which there is India. In India there is Vrja zone. In Vrja zone there is Nandagāon. In Nandagāon there is Nanda's house. In Nanda's house the child Krsna is standing. Krsna's mother named Yaśodā threateningly asked Him why He had eaten dust and ordered Him to open His mouth. When He opened His mouth, Yaśodā beheld the entire world, Nandagāon, Nanda's house and also herself (Śrīmadbhāgavata 10/8/39). Similarly Arjuna also beheld the entire universe in a part of the Lord's body.

ब्रह्माणमीशं कमलासनस्थ-
मृषींश्च सर्वानुरगांश्च दिव्यान् ॥ १५ ॥

arjuna uvāca
paśyāmi devāṁstava deva dehe
sarvāṁstathā bhūtaviśeṣasaṅghān
brahmāṇamīśaṁ kamalāsasnastha-
mṛṣīṁśca sarvānuragāṁśca divyān

Arjuna said:

O Lord, I see in Your body all the gods and multitude of different beings; Brahmā seated on His lotus-seat, Śiva, all the sages and celestial serpents. 15

Comment:

'Paśyāmi devāṁstava deva dehe sarvāṁstathā bhūtaviśeṣasaṅghān'— With the divine eye Arjuna was able to behold not only multitude of beings but also paradise, the abode of the gods and also the entire universe with Brahmā, the creator, Viṣṇu, the preserver and Maheśa, the destroyer.

'Brahmāṇamīśaṁ kamalāsanastham'—Arjuna says that he beheld Brahmā seated on the lotus-seat. This lotus-seat is the lotus sprung from the navel of Lord Viṣṇu. It means that Arjuna saw the stalk of the lotus and also the place from where the lotus sprang up. It shows that he had a vision of Viṣṇu, the progenitor of Brahmā. He also saw Lord Śiva sitting in his abode under the banyan tree on mount Kailāsa.

'Ṛṣīṁśca sarvānuragāṁśca divyān'—Arjuna beheld the sages living on the earth and the divine serpents living in the under-world.

In this verse Arjuna's statement proves that he beheld the three worlds — the earth, the paradise and the under-world in Lord Kṛṣṇa's body with three division concentrated at one place (Gītā 11/13). Besides them he also beheld the abodes of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa as well as those three chief deities. This is all due to the glory of the divine eye bestowed by the Lord.

An Important Fact

When Lord Kṛṣṇa declares that He holds the entire universe in a limb of his body, Arjuna prays to Him to reveal His divine form to him. So Lord Kṛṣṇa asks him to behold the entire universe in His one limb (11/7). Sañjaya who was offered divine vision by Veda Vyāsa also declares that Arjuna saw in the person of that Supreme Deity, comprised in one limb, the whole universe with its many fold divisions (11/13). But Arjuna here (in 11/15) declares that he beholds multitude of different beings; he does not use the expression 'Ekastham' (resting at one place). The reason is that wherever Arjuna saw, he beheld only His cosmic form. At that time Arjuna did not look at the Lord Who was acting as his chariot- driver. So he beheld only his cosmic form. But the Lord revealed the entire universe in his one limb and Sañjaya also beheld the Lord sitting as the chariot-driver in the chariot as well as His cosmic form. So both of them use the term 'Ekastham' (concentrated at one place).*

Now a question rises in which limb according to Lord Kṛṣṇa as well as Sañjaya Arjuna beheld the cosmic form. The answer is that it is very difficult to mention a particular limb because millions of universes are held in a pore of His body. It means that He holds infinite universes in each of His limbs.†

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* The term 'Ekastham' (concentrated at one place) has been used both by the Lord and by Sañjaya. So it should be assumed that Arjuna also beheld the cosmic form in a limb of the Lord.

† Infinite universes rise up from each of your pores and fall down again in the same way as particles of dust appear flying in the rays of the sun coming through a window screened with netting (Śrīmadbhā. 10/14/11).

अनेकबाहूदरवक्त्रनेत्रं
पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम् ।
नान्तं न मध्यं न पुनस्तवादिं
पश्यामि विश्वेश्वर विश्वरूप ॥ १६ ॥

anekabāhūdaravaktranetraṁ
paśyāmi tvāṁ sarvato'nantarūpam
nāntaṁ na madhyaṁ na punastavādiṁ
paśyāmi viśveśvara viśvarūpa

O Lord of the universe, I behold You, infinite in forms on all sides with nemerous arms, bellies, faces, and eyes. O Universal Form, I see neither Your beginning nor middle nor end. 16

Comment:

Arjuna uses two vocatives 'Viśvarūpa' (Universal Form) and 'Viśveśvara' (Lord of the universe) to convey that this universe is nothing but His manifestation and He is also the Lord of the entire universe. The body of a human being is insentient while its master, the soul is sentient. But there is no such distinction in the cosmic form of the Lord. In the cosmic form everything is sentient. By the vocative 'Viśvarūpa' Arjuna declares that He is the body and by the vocative 'Viśveśvara' Arjuna means to say that He is the master of the body.

'Anekabāhūdaravaktranetram' — Arjuna beheld the Lord with countless arms, stomachs, mouths (faces) and eyes.

'Paśyāmi tvāṁ sarvato'nantarūpam'—Arjuna saw His innumerable forms extended on all sides.

'Nāntaṁ na madhyaṁ na punastavādim'—The cosmic body as was revealed to Arjuna, was infinite on all sides. Arjuna could know neither its beginning, nor middle, nor end because there was no limit of it.

Arjuna first used the term 'end' because he wanted to see the end of His body on all sides to know His stature. But when he was unable to see it, he wanted to see the middle and then the beginning but it was of no avail.

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रिणं च
तेजोराशिं सर्वतो दीप्तिमन्तम् ।
पश्यामि त्वां दुर्निरीक्ष्यं समन्ता-
द्दीप्तानलार्कद्युतिमप्रमेयम् ॥ १७ ॥

kirīṭinaṁ gadinaṁ cakriṇaṁ ca
tejorāśiṁ sarvato dīptimantam
paśyāmi tvāṁ durnirīkṣyaṁ samantā-
ddīptānalārkadyutimaprameyam

I see You with diadem, club and discus; a mass of splendour shining all round, having a brilliance like that of blazing fire and sun, dazzling and immeasurable on all sides. 17

Comment:

'Kirīṭinaṁ gadinaṁ cakriṇaṁ ca'—The Lord's cosmic form retained the famous emblems club, discus and also diadem. Here the term 'Ca' (and) should denote conch and lotus. Thus Arjuna could behold the four-armed Lord also in that cosmic form.

'Tejorāśim'—The cosmic form of the Lord was a mass of splendour i.e., there was unlimited splendour in that form. Sañjaya also described His splendour in these words, "If there were the effulgence of a thousand suns blazing forth all at once in the sky, that would hardly be like the splendour of the mighty Lord" (11/12).

'Sarvato dīptimantam'—Being the effulgence incarnate the Lord was shining everywhere on all sides.

'Paśyāmi tvāṁ durnirīkṣyaṁ samantāddiptānalārkadyutimaprameyam'—This brilliance of the cosmic form of the Lord was like that of blazing fire and sun. As brilliance of the sun dazzles the eyes, it also dazzled the eyes; the eyes could not bear its sight [Here it is surprising that though Arjuna was blessed with the divine eye to behold that form, yet it dazzled that eye because of its most wonderful type of effulgence].

The splendour and effulgence of the Lord was limitless and immeasurable on all sides and no other splendour can stand comparison with it.

त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यं
त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम्।
त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता
सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे॥ १८॥

tvamakṣaraṁ paramaṁ veditavyaṁ
tvamasya viśvasya paraṁ nidhānam
tvamavyayaḥ śāśvatadharmagoptā
sanātanastvaṁ puruṣo mato me

You are the Imperishable, the Supreme Being to be realized; You are the ultimate resort of this universe; You are the protector of the eternal Dharma (Duty & Righteousness) and You are the eternal imperishable Being—I deem. 18

Comment:

'Tvamakṣaraṁ paramaṁ veditavyam'—The Lord is the imperishable Supreme Being who is attributeless and formless and Who has been described in the scriptures as the absolute or Brahma and Who is realized by the liberated souls.

'Tvamasya viśvasya paraṁ nidhānam'—Arjuna says that the Lord is the ultimate resort or support of the entire universe. At final annihilation the entire universe merges in Him and at the beginning of the new creation it emanates again from Him. Thus He is the final resort (abiding place) of the entire universe (Here Arjuna offers praises to the Lord Who is formless and is endowed with attributes).

'Tvaṁ śāśvatadharmagoptā'—Arjuna says that when there is decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, the Lord by incarnating destroys the evils and protects 'Sanātana Dharma', the Dharma that has existed since time immemorial and shall exist for ever [Here Arjuna offers praises to the Lord endowed with attributes and form].

'Avyayaḥ sanātanastvaṁ puruṣo mato me'—Arjuna deems that the Lord is the eternal, imperishable Being, the almighty God Who remains imperishable even when the entire universe perishes.

Link:–After describing the wonderful cosmic form of the Lord from the fifteenth verse to the eighteenth verse Arjuna in the next two verses describes fierceness, terror and power of the cosmic form.

अनादिमध्यान्तमनन्तवीर्य-
मनन्तबाहुं शशिसूर्यनेत्रम् ।
पश्यामि त्वां दीप्तहुताशवक्त्रं
स्वतेजसा विश्वमिदं तपन्तम् ॥ १९ ॥

anādimadhyāntamanantavirya-
manantabāhuṁ śaśīsūryanetram
paśyāmi tvāṁ dīptahutāśavaktraṁ
svatejasā viśvamidaṁ tapantam

I see You without beginning, middle or end, infinite in power, of infinite arms, the sun and the moon being Your eyes, the blazing fire Your mouth; scorching the universe with Your radiance. 19

Comment:

'Anādi madhyāntam'—Arjuna saw the Lord without beginning, middle or end i.e., He had no limit.

In the sixteenth verse Arjuna also said, "I see neither Your beginning nor middle nor end." This statement conveys the infinitude of the cosmic body i.e., infinitude in space while in the nineteenth verse there is the context of the infinitude of time. It means that the Lord is beyond the limit of time, space and causation. All the space, time and causation are within Him. Then how can He be encompassed by space, time and causation. In other words He can't be measured by space, time and causation.

'Anantavīryam'—Arjuna wants to convey that the Lord's power, strength, glory and energy are unlimited.

'Anantabāhum'*—The Lord is endowed with numberless arms.

'Śaśisūryanetram'—The sun and the moon which illuminate the entire universe are the Lord's eyes. Thus the universe is illuminated by His light.

'Dīptahutāśavaktram'—The Lord's mouth is the blazing fire which receives the various articles offerd when the religious sacrifice is performed.

'Svatejasā viśvamidaṁ tapantam'–The Lord scorches the universe with His radiance. It means that the persons, things and incidents etc., that create the unfavourable and undesirable circumstances to torture beings and those who are affected by those circumstances are the fragments of the cosmic form of the Lord.

द्यावापृथिव्योरिदमन्तरं हि
व्याप्तं त्वयैकेन दिशश्च सर्वाः ।
दृष्ट्वाद्भुतं रूपमुग्रं तवेदं
लोकत्रयं प्रव्यथितं महात्मन् ॥ २० ॥

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* In the sixteenth verse Arjuna said that the Lord had numerous arms while here he says that He is endowed with infinite arms. It seems that there is repetition. But actually it is not so. There is the description of the divine (mild) form of the Lord while here is the description of His fierce and terrible form.

dyāvāpṛthivyoridamantaraṁ hi
vyāptaṁ tvayaikena diśaśca sarvāḥ
dṛṣṭvādbhutaṁ rūpamugraṁ taveḍaṁ
lokatrayaṁ pravyathitaṁ mahātman

The space between heaven and earth and all the quarters are filled by You alone. Seeing this marvellous and terrible form of Yours, O Great-Soul, the three worlds feel greatly alarmed. 20

Comment:

'Mahātman'—By this address Arjuna means to say that His self is the greatest of all.

'Dyāvāpṛthivyoridamantaraṁ hi vyāptaṁ tvayaikena diśaśca sarvāḥ'—The entire space between heaven and earth is filled with the Lord.

The Lord is all-pervading, He pervades all the ten quarters — east, west, north, south, east-north, north-west, west-south, south-east, upward and downward.

'Dṛṣṭvādbhutaṁ rūpamugraṁ tavedaṁ lokatrayaṁ pravyathitam'—[Arjuna having described the terrible form of the Lord in the nineteenth verse and in the first half of the twentieth verse, now starts describing the result of beholding His terrible form]. Seeing the dreadful, uncommon, marvellous and resplendent form of the Lord all the beings inhabiting the heaven, the earth and the nether world are greatly alarmed and are trembling with fear.

Though Arjuna has mentioned the heaven and the earth, yet he has used the expression 'the three worlds' which may include the nether world also. The reason is that Arjuna did not behold the scenes systematically one after the other. He beheld the heaven, the earth and the nether world etc., all together and so he is describing them in the same manner in which he beheld them.

Now a doubt rises why the three worlds were greatly alarmed and trembling with fear. Did the beings of the three worlds also behold the cosmic form ? And if they beheld, then how ?

The clarification is that Arjuna beheld those three worlds within the cosmic body of the Lord. Those three worlds were greatly alarmed and were trembling with fear after beholding the terrible beast such as lions, tigers, snakes as well as death in His cosmic body.

A Vital Fact

In fact the entire universe is a fragment of the cosmic form of the Lord. The transience and modifications that appear in the universe are nothing besides the sport of the Lord. The Lord as well as his cosmic form has His independent existence while the universe has no independent existence of its own. Arjuna beheld the cosmic form of the Lord with the divine eye while devotees behold this universe as the manifestation of the Lord.

A voluptuary seeks pleasures in the universe while a devotee who has nothing to do with mundane pleasures beholds it as his Lord's manifestations. As a child regards the same woman as its mother, a father as his daughter, a husband as his wife and a lion as his prey, similarly the world appears true with human eyes, transitory with discriminating eyes, Divine with emotional eyes and a fragment of the cosmic form with divine eyes.

Link:—In the next two verses Arjuna describes the scene of heaven which he beheld in the Lord's cosmic form.

अमी हि त्वां सुरसङ्घा विशन्ति
केचिद्भीताः प्राञ्जलयो गृणन्ति ।
स्वस्तीत्युक्त्वा महर्षिसिद्धसङ्घाः
स्तुवन्ति त्वां स्तुतिभिः पुष्कलाभिः ॥ २१ ॥

amī hi tvāṁ surasaṅghā viśanti
kecidbhītāḥ prāñjalayo gṛṇanti
svastītyuktvā maharṣisiddhasaṅghāḥ
stuvanti tvāṁ stutibhiḥ puṣkalābhiḥ

Those hosts of gods are entering You; some in awe with palms joined are chanting Your names and glories; bands of great sages and Siddhas (Emancipated Souls) pronounce "May it be well" and praise You with excellent hymns. 21

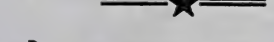
Comment:

'Amī hi tvāṁ surasaṅghā viśanti'— When Arjuna went to heaven, he became familiar with the gods there. So Arjuna says that these gods were entering the Lord's terrible form. All of the gods are born of Him, remain established in Him and again merge in Him.

'Kecidbhītāḥ prāñjalayo gṛṇanti'— Hosts of gods were entering the Lord's terrible form. The remaining gods were terribly afraid of meeting the same fate. With joined palms, therefore, they began to utter the Lord's names, glories and praises.

Though the gods, being afraid of death, viewing the man-lion incarnation (which was within the cosmic form) were singing praises of the Lord. But to Arjuna it seemed that these gods being terrified of the cosmic form were praising the Lord in His cosmic form.

'Svastītyuktvā maharṣi-siddhasaṅghāḥ stuvanti tvāṁ stutibhiḥ puṣkalābhiḥ'—The group of seven principal sages, the sages living in the abode of gods and other great sages such as Sanaka and Sanandana etc., as well as the gods were extolling the Lord by means of sublime hymns.



रुद्रादित्या वसवो ये च साध्या
विश्वेऽश्विनौ मरुतश्चोष्मपाश्च ।
गन्धर्वयक्षासुरसिद्धसङ्घा
वीक्षन्ते त्वां विस्मिताश्चैव सर्वे ॥ २२ ॥

rudrādityā vasavo ye ca sādhyā
viśve'śvinau marutaścoṣmapāśca
gandharvayakṣāsurasiddhasaṅghā
vīkṣante tvāṁ vismitāścaiva sarve

The eleven Rudras, twelve Ādityas, eight Vasus, twelve Sādhyas, ten Viśvedevas, two Aśvinīkumāras, forty-nine Maruts, manes, hosts of Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Asuras and Siddhas—they are all gazing at You in amazement. 22

Comment:

'Rudrādityā vasavo ye ca sādhyā viśve'śvinau marutaścoṣmapāśca'—Brief notes on eleven Rudras, twelve Ādityas, eight Vasus, two Aśvinīkumāras and forty-nine Maruts have already been given in the explanation of the sixth verse of this chapter. The names of the twelve Sādhyas are — Mana, Anumantā, Prāṇa, Nara, Yāna, Citti, Haya, Naya, Haṁsa, Nārāyaṇa, Prabhava and Vibhu (Vāyu Purāṇa 66/15-16).

The ten Viśvedevas are—Kratu, Dakṣa, Śrava, Satya, Kāla, Kāma, Dhuni, Kuruvān, Prabhavān and Rocamāna (Vāyu Purāṇa 66/31-32).

The seven manes are — Kavyavāha, Anala, Soma, Yama, Aryamā, Agniṣvātta and Barhiṣat (Śiva Purāṇa, Dharma. 63/2).

They are called 'Ūṣmapā because they eat hot food.

'Gandharvayakṣāsurasiddha-saṅghā'—The Gandharvas are said to be born of Kaśyapa's three wives named Muni, Prādhā and Ariṣṭā. They are expert in the art of different melodies and music. They are musicians of the heaven.

The Yakṣas are said to be born of Kaśyapa's wife Khasā.

The 'Asuras' (Demons) are the 'Daityas, Dānavas and Rākṣasas' who are the sworn enemies* of Devas (the gods). Kapila etc., are known as Siddha.

'Vikṣante tvāṁ vismitāścaiva sarve'—All the above mentioned gods, manes, Gandharvas, Yakṣas were gazing at the Lord in amazement. All of them were limbs of the cosmic form of the Lord.

Link:–Arjuna in the next three verses while describing the terrible cosmic form of the Lord explains its effect on the universe.

रूपं महत्ते बहुवक्त्रनेत्रं
महाबाहो बहुबाहूरुपादम् ।
बहूदरं बहुदंष्ट्राकरालं
दृष्ट्वा लोकाः प्रव्यथितास्तथाहम् ॥ २३ ॥

rūpaṁ mahatte bahuvaktranetraṁ
mahābāho bahubāhūrupādam
bahūdaraṁ bahudaṁṣṭrākarālaṁ
dṛṣṭvā lokāḥ pravyathitāstathāham

O Mighty-Armed, seeing Your immeasurable and dreadful form with numerous mouths, eyes, arms, thighs, feet, bellies and terrible fangs, the worlds are terror-struck, and so am I. 23

Comment:

[In the Lord's cosmic form from the fifteenth verse to the eighteenth verse there is the description of the Lord's divine form, from the nineteenth verse to the twenty-second verse of his terrible form and from the twenty-third verse to the thirtieth verse of His very dreadful form.]

'Bahuvaktranetram'—The Lord's mouths and eyes in His dreadful cosmic form were of various sizes, shapes and they expressed different moods.

'Bahubāhūrupādam'—The arms, thighs and feet were also of different sizes, shapes and colours etc., and their movements were also strange.

* When the gods and the demons are described together, the term 'Asura' (Demon) stands for those who are the sworn enemies of gods.

'Bahudaṁṣṭrākarālam dṛṣṭvā lokāḥ pravyathitāstathāham'—After beholding the terrible teeth and fangs in the Lord's mouths, the worlds were terrified and also Arjuna was terrorstruck.

Arjuna had already described numerous arms, eyes, bellies, faces of the Lord's cosmic body and also the terror in the three worlds after beholding them. Then why is He repeating it ?

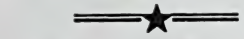
There are several reasons for doing so.

(1) Arjuna beholds novelty and singularity in each phase of the cosmic form.

(2) After having a vision of the Lord's cosmic form Arjuna was so much confused and alarmed that he did not remember what he had already described and so he repeated it.

(3) First he spoke of the three worlds feeling greatly alarmed after beholding the terrible form of the cosmic body. But here he says that he was also terrified at the sight of the Lord's terrible cosmic form.

(4) When a man is overwhelmed with emotions of fear or joy or sorrow or surprise, he repeats a word or a phrase or a sentence several times. After seeing a cobra, a man being afraid of it cries, 'A cobra ! A cobra ! A cobra !' Similarly a person left alone on an island may describe his loneliness by saying. "Alone ! Alone ! All alone," and so on. Thus Arjuna has repeated the words out of fear, joy and surprise etc. Arjuna admits this fact when he says, "Having seen Your form which was never seen before I feel delighted and my mind is distressed with fear" (11/45). It means that there is no tautology.



नभःस्पृशं दीप्तमनेकवर्णं
व्यात्ताननं दीप्तविशालनेत्रम् ।
दृष्ट्वा हि त्वां प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा
धृतिं न विन्दामि शमं च विष्णो ॥ २४ ॥

nabhaḥspṛśaṁ dīptamanekavarṇaṁ
vyāttānanaṁ dīptaviśālanetram
dṛṣṭvā hi tvāṁ pravyathitāntarātmā
dhṛtiṁ na vindāmi śamaṁ ca viṣṇo

When I see Your form touching the sky, effulgent with many colours, with mouth wide open, with large shining eyes, my heart trembles with fear, I lose courage and find no peace, O Viṣṇu. 24

Comment:

[In the twentieth verse Arjuna described the Lord's height and breadth while here he describes His tremendous height only.]

'Viṣṇo'—Arjuna says that it was all-pervading Lord Viṣṇu Himself Who incarnated as Kṛṣṇa in order to lighten the burden of the earth.

'Dīptamanekavarṇam'—The Lord's terrible cosmic form was multicoloured and effulgent.

'Nabhaḥspṛśam'—His form was so high that it was touching the sky. It means that as far as Arjuna could see, he beheld the cosmic form of the Lord. It indicates that even the divine sight could not have an access to the end of the limitless cosmic form of the Lord.

'Vyāttānanaṁ dīptaviśālanetram'—Just like a wild beast the Lord's mouth was wide open to devour the entire universe.

His eyes were large, shining and fiery.

'Dṛṣṭvā hi tvāṁ pravyathit-

āntarātmā dhṛtim na vindāmi śamaṁ ca viṣṇo'—Arjuna says that he was very much frightened at the sight of the Lord's cosmic form and he lost his courage, self control and peace of mind.

Here a question arises that Arjuna besides being a valiant warrior of extraordinary calibre was blessed with divine eye by the Lord, yet he trembled with fear while beholding the Lord's cosmic form but Sañjaya was not terrorstruck. Why ?

The answer is that saints say that Bhīṣma, Vidura, Sañjaya and Kuntī knew the Lord in reality, while Arjuna did not know Him so much. Arjuna's delusion was not completely destroyed (11/49). So he trembled with fear. But Sañjaya knew the reality about the Lord viz., he had delusion. So Sañjaya was not terrorstruck.

It proves that the Lord and saints shower their grace even on the unqualified and underserving persons, but the qualified and deserving persons know the reality about Him in the same way as the mother loves her innocent child more than she loves the grown up son while the grown up son knows her and her loving nature more than the innocent child. The Lord loved the simple and innocent cow-herds, cowherdesses and cows more than He loved the liberated souls though the latter knew His true self. Similarly Sañjaya deserved to have a vision of the Lord's cosmic form and so he could behold it without requesting the Lord while the Lord Himself had to arouse curiosity in Arjuna and revealed to him His cosmic form because Arjuna regarded the Lord as his friend, not as the Lord. So the Lord was more gracious to Arjuna and it was by His grace that Arjuna's delusion was destroyed (Gītā 18/73). It proves that the Lord by His grace destroys the delusion of His devotees.

दंष्ट्राकरालानि च ते मुखानि
दृष्ट्वैव कालानलसन्निभानि ।
दिशो न जाने न लभे च शर्म
प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥ २५ ॥

daṁṣṭrākarālāni ca te mukhāni
dṛṣṭvaiva kālānalasannibhāni
diśo na jāne na labhe ca śarma
prasīda deveśa jagannivāsa

Seeing Your mouths terrible with tusks, resembling the raging fire at the time of universal destruction, I know not the four quarters, nor do I find peace. Therefore be kind to me, O Lord of the gods and Abode of the universe. 25

Comment:

'Daṁṣṭrākarālāni ca te mukhāni dṛṣṭvaiva kālānalasannibhāni'—Arjuna says that seeing the Lord's frightful faces on account of their terrible tusks and teeth and flaring like the raging fire at the time of universal dissolution, he was terrorstruck.

'Diśo na jāne na labhe ca śarma'—Beholding such a terrible form of the Lord, Arjuna could not know even the four quarters. The quarters are discerned with the help of sun-rise and sun-set. But the sun was shining as the Lord's eye situated within His cosmic form. Moreover the splendour of the Lord was more than even the effulgence of a thousand suns blazing forth all at once

(11/12). So he knew not the four quarters and the directions. So being utterly amazed and confused he lost happiness and peace.

'Prasīda deveśa jagannivāsa'—He is the Lord of the gods and Abode of the entire universe. So the gods and men etc., being terrified invoke the Lord only. After beholding the terrible form of the Lord being terror-struck, Arjuna thought that the Lord was displeased and angry. So he prayed to Him to be pleased with him and kind to him.

Link:–Arjuna in the next two verses describes that the chief warriors were rushing headlong into the Lord's fearful mouths.

अमी च त्वां धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः
सर्वे सहैवावनिपालसङ्घैः ।
भीष्मो द्रोणः सूतपुत्रस्तथासौ
सहास्मदीयैरपि योधमुख्यैः ॥ २६ ॥
वक्त्राणि ते त्वरमाणा विशन्ति
दंष्ट्राकरालानि भयानकानि ।
केचिद्विलग्ना दशनान्तरेषु
संदृश्यन्ते चूर्णितैरुत्तमाङ्गैः ॥ २७ ॥

amī ca tvām dhṛtarāṣṭrasya putrāḥ
sarve sahaivāvanipālasaṅghaiḥ
bhīṣmo droṇaḥ sūtaputrastathāsau
sahāsmadiyairapi yodhamukhyaiḥ
vaktrāṇi te tvaramāṇā viśanti
daṁṣṭrākarālāni bhayānakāni
kecidvilagnā daśanāntareṣu
saṁdṛśyante cūrṇitairuttamāṅgaiḥ

All the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra with hosts of kings of the earth, Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Karṇa, with the chief warriors on our side as well are rushing headlong into Your mouths, terrible with tusks and fearful to look at. Some are seen sticking in the gaps between the teeth with their heads crushed. 26-27

Comment:

'Bhīṣmo droṇaḥ sūtaputrastathāsau sahāsmadīyairapi yodhamukhyaiḥ'—Arjuna says that the chief warriors on their side such as Dhṛṣṭdyumna, Virāṭa and Drupada etc., believed in righteousness and were prepared to wage the war regarding it as their duty. All these warriors as well as Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Karṇa were rushing headlong into the Lord's mouth. Arjuna mentions these three names of the rival army to explain that they also joined the army as a part of their duty. *

'Amī ca tvām dhṛtarāṣṭrasya-

* Bhīṣma—Bhīṣma is a very well-known figure in the history of the world for his vow of life long celibacy and renunciation of his claim to his father's throne in order to facilitate his father's marriage with Satyavatī. He was so firm in his vow that he fought against his preceptor Paraśurāma. Lord Kṛṣṇa had vowed that he would remain unarmed. But when Bhīṣma

putrāḥ sarve sahaivāvanipāla-saṅghaiḥ'—Those kings who were the well-wishers of Duryodhana and were ready to fight on his side as well as Dhṛtarāṣṭra's hundred sons—Duryodhana and Duḥśāsana etc., were rushing head long into the Lord's mouths, terrible with tusks.

'Kecidvilagnā daśanāntareṣu saṁdṛśyante cūrṇitairuttamāṅgaiḥ'—Some warriors were devoured by the Lord but some of them were seen sticking in the gaps between the teeth with their heads crushed.

Here a doubt rises how Arjuna saw the warriors rushing head long into the mouth of the Lord's cosmic form when they were arrayed alive on the battle-field. The clarification is that the Lord asked Arjuna to behold whatever else he desired to see in His cosmic form (11/7). Moreover Arjuna had a doubt whether they or their enemies would win (2/6). So Arjuna could foresee their own victory in the Lord's cosmic body. The same fact will be pointed out by the Lord in response to Arjuna's question (11/32-34).

Link:–In the next verse Arjuna describes those notable warriors who were striving for God-Realization and took up arms regarding it as their duty by giving an illustration of rivers.

यथा नदीनां बहवोऽम्बुवेगाः
समुद्रमेवाभिमुखा द्रवन्ति ।
तथा तवामी नरलोकवीरा
विशन्ति वक्त्राण्यभिविज्वलन्ति ॥ २८ ॥

yathā nadīnāṁ bahavo'mbuvegāḥ
samudramevābhimukhā dravanti
tathā tavāmī naralokavīrā
viśanti vaktrāṇyabhivijvalanti

As diverse torrents of rivers rush towards the ocean, so do these warriors of the mortal world enter Your blazing mouths. 28

Comment:

'Yathā nadīnāṁ bahavo'mbuvegāḥ samudramevābhimukhā dravanti'—The source of the water of the river is ocean. Water evaporates from the ocean, falls as rain on the earth and shapes as rivers. So rivers have a natural tendency to flow towards the ocean and finally lose

vowed that he would compel Lord Krsna to be equipped with weapon, He had to take up arms, once a whip and the second time a disc and run towards Bhīsma.

Drona — Drona ate Duryodhana's food. So it was incumbent upon him to fight, thus he joined the battle regarding it as his duty. But at last listening to the gods he withdraws himself from the battle thinking of his duty as a Brāhmana (a member of the priest class). He was so impartial that he taught his own son, Asvatthāmā how to set Brahmāstra (a weapon or missile which caused infallible destruction and was used and withdrawn by chanting sacred formulas) in motion only while to his disciple Arjuna he taught both how to set it in motion and how to withdraw it.

Karna—Being a bosom friend of Duryodhana, he fought on his side. Even when Lord Krsna disclosed him that he was Kuntī's son, he refused to give up the cause of Duryodhana. Moreover he asked Lord Krsna not to disclose the secret to Yudhisthira otherwise he, regarding him as his elder brother, would handover the kingdom to him and he would hand it over to Duryodhana. So the Pāndavas would lead a miserable life for ever.

His charities were imcomparable. One day Indra, the king of the gods, in Arjuna's interest, begged him to make a gift of his natural armour and ear-rings attached to his body. With great delight he tore his armour and ear-rings from his body and gave them away. Kuntī asked him not to kill any one of her sons in the war. He promised not to kill her four sons but he would fight against Arjuna who would either be killed or would kill him. Even if Arjuna killed, she would have five sons (including him viz., Karna).

their names and identity by merging in the ocean. In fact they had no identity of their own even in the past but they merely appeared separate in the form of the flow of rivers.

'Tathā tavāmī naralokavīrā viśanti vaktrāṇyabhivijvalanti'—Just like the rivers, all the creatures rush towards the Lord to attain eternal bliss. But some of them by identifying themselves with the perishable and unreal body are engaged in worldly pleasures and prosperity and thus by error admit their separate existence. But there are other valiant devotees who, taking no heed to pleasures and prosperity, march towards God in order to attain the goal of human life. Bhīṣma and Droṇa etc., were such valiant warriors who were entering the Lord's mouths which were blazing with the fire of knowledge and thus they became fiery themselves by attaining oneness with Him.

The term 'Amī (Those) has been used to denote the small number of devotees who strive for God-Realization.

Link:–Arjuna in the next verse describes those warriors who being engaged in worldly pleasures and prosperity joined the war in order to gain praise and kingdom by giving the illustration of moths.

यथा प्रदीप्तं ज्वलनं पतङ्गा
विशन्ति नाशाय समृद्धवेगाः ।
तथैव नाशाय विशन्ति लोका-
स्तवापि वक्त्राणि समृद्धवेगाः ॥ २९ ॥

yathā pradīptaṁ jvalanaṁ pataṅgā
viśanti nāśāya samṛddhavegāḥ
tathaiva nāśāya viśanti lokā-
stavāpi vaktrāṇi samṛddhavegāḥ

As moths rush headlong into the blazing fire for destruction, so do these people hurriedly speed into Your mouths for their destruction. 29

Comment:

'Yathā pradīptaṁ..... smṛddhavegāḥ'—Moths living in green grass, in the dark night of the rainy season, being enamoured of blazing fire, in order to get light, rush into the blazing fire for their destruction. If a person out of pity extinguishes the fire, they feel very sad because they foolishly think that they have been deprived of a great gain.

'Tathaiva nāśāya viśanti lokāstavāpi vaktrāṇi samṛddhavegāḥ'—Worldly people generally hanker after worldly pleasures and prosperity and they also think of them. Such type of warriors were Duryodhana, his co-warriors and such other kings who were entering the Lord's blazing mouths for their destruction i.e., they were paving their way for eighty-four lac forms of life and hells. It means that generally people hanker after worldly pleasures, prosperity, praise, honour and rest etc. In order to gain them they have to bear insult, dishonour, loss, worry and internal burning sensation etc., yet they yearn for them. *

* A moth out of ignorance falls on the burning lamp and so does fish devour bait on a fish-hook out of ignorance. But people in spite of knowing the disastrous consequences of desires don't renounce them. How tempting this delusion !
(Bhartṛhari Vairāgyaśataka)

Link:–Having described the entry of the warriors into the Lord's mouths, Arjuna now in the next two verses describes the Lord's terrible form and the process of their destruction.

लेलिह्यसे ग्रसमानः समन्ता-
ल्लोकान्समग्रान्वदनैर्ज्वलद्भिः ।
तेजोभिरापूर्य जगत्समग्रं
भासस्तवोग्राः प्रतपन्ति विष्णो ॥ ३० ॥

lelihyase grasamānaḥ samantā-
llokānsamagrānvadanairjvaladbhiḥ
tejobhirāpūrya jagatsamagram
bhāsastavogrāḥ pratapanti viṣṇo

Devouring all the worlds with Your flaming mouths, You are licking them on all sides. Your fiery rays, filling the whole world with radiance, are burning it, O Viṣṇu. 30

Comment:

'Lelihyase grasamānaḥ samantāllokānsamagrānvadanairjvaladbhiḥ'—The Lord was devouring the beings of all the worlds through His burning mouths and was licking them with His tongue lest any one of them should escape.

'Tejobhirāpūrya jagatsamagram bhāsastavogrāḥ pratapanti viṣṇo'—The Lord's brilliance was very terrible and it was burning and tormenting the entire universe.

Link:–Having beheld the Lord's cosmic form in its most terrible phase in which the warriors were rushing headlong for their destruction, Arjuna was terrified and also filled with curiosity to know Who Śrī Kṛṣṇa really was and what He proposed to do. So he put the question.

आख्याहि मे को भवानुग्ररूपो
नमोऽस्तु ते देववर प्रसीद ।
विज्ञातुमिच्छामि भवन्तमाद्यं
न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम् ॥ ३१ ॥

ākhyāhi me ko bhavānugrarūpo
namo'stu te devavara prasīda
vijñātumicchāmi bhavantamādyam
na hi prajānāmi tava pravṛttim

Tell me who You are, so fierce in form. I bow down to You, O Supreme Deity, be kind. I wish to know You, the Primal One, in essence; for I know not Your purpose. 31

Comment:

'Ākhyāhi me ko bhavānugrarūpo namo'stu te devavara prasīda'—Arjuna says that the Lord revealed Himself in His divine form as well as the terrific form. So Arjuna could not know the reality about Him. So he asked Him Who He was. Beholding such a terrible form what could he

do but bow down his head? So he bowed down to Him. Having a vision of His terrible form, licking the people on all sides, Arjuna prayed to Him to be merciful to him.

'Vijñātumicchāmi bhavantamādyaṁ na hi prajānāmi tava pravṛttim'—The Lord first of all incarnated Himself in his cosmic form (in the form of the world). So he has been addressed as the Primal One. Arjuna could not know the Lord's motive in revealing that divine form as well as terrible form in His cosmic body. So he wanted to know His motive in that revelation and also what He wanted to do afterwards.

Now a question arises that the Lord's first incarnation was in the cosmic form (in the form of the universe) and here Arjuna beheld His cosmic form in a limb of His body. Are both of His forms the same or different? The answer is that it is only the Lord who knows the reality; yet after reflection it seems that the universe was also within the cosmic form which Arjuna beheld. When it is said that the Lord pervades everywhere it means that he pervades the infinite universes, within and without this universe. All these universes are held in one of His limbs.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord answers Arjuna's question.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

कालोऽस्मि ··· लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो
लोकान्समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः ।
ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे
येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥ ३२ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca
kālo'smi lokakṣayakṛtpravṛddho
lokānsamāhartumiha pravṛttaḥ
ṛte'pi tvāṁ na bhaviṣyanti sarve
ye'vasthitāḥ pratyanīkeṣu yodhāḥ

The Blessed Lord said:

I am the mighty world-destroying Time now engaged in wiping out the world. Even without you the warriors arrayed in the hostile army will not survive. 32

Comment:

[After reflection, the Lord's cosmic form seems very extraordinary because even for Arjuna possessing the divine eye it was hard to look at (11/17). Being terrified Arjuna asked him Who He was. It seems that, if Arjuna had not put this question to Him, He might have continued to reveal Himself to him. But when Arjuna questioned Him, He ceased revealing Himself to him and answered his question.]

'Kālo'smi lokakṣayakṛtpravṛddhaḥ'—In the preceding verse Arjuna asked the Lord who He was. So the Lord replied that He was the mighty world-destroying Time.

'Lokānsamāhartumiha pravṛttaḥ'—Arjuna said to the Lord that he did not know His purpose what He wanted to do. So the Lord answered that He wanted to exterminate the warriors of the two armies.

'Ṛte'pi tvāṁ na bhaviṣyanti sarve ye'vasthitāḥ pratyanīkeṣu yodhāḥ'—Arjuna had said that he would not fight (2/9). So Lord Kṛṣṇa says that even without him the warriors arrayed in the hostile army

will not survive because He Himself is bent upon their destruction, so their chances for survival are nil. Moreover he himself has seen that the warriors of both the armies were rushing headlong into His terrible mouths.

Here a doubt rises that Arjuna beheld the warriors of both the armies rushing headlong into the Lord's mouth, why does the Lord refer only to the warriors of the hostile army that they will not survive even without him? The clarification is that Arjuna while fighting was going to kill the warriors of the hostile army. So the Lord says that even if he does not kill the warriors of the hostile army, they will not be spared; their destruction is inevitable.

Now another doubt rises why warriors such as Aśvatthāmā etc., were saved. The clarification is that the Lord talks only about those warriors who would be killed by Arjuna. The Lord means to say to Arjuna that the destruction of those warriors of his hostile army who would be killed by him is inevitable because they have already been slain by Him, he should become merely an instrument (11/33).

Link:–In the above verse the Lord declared that even without Arjuna the warriors of his hostile army would not survive. Why then should Arjuna at all engage himself in this carnage? The answer is given in the next two verses, by the Lord.

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व
जित्वा शत्रून्भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम्।
मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव
निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन्॥ ३३॥

tasmāttvamuttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva
jitvā śatrūnbhuṅkṣva rājyaṁ samṛddham
mayaivaite nihatāḥ pūrvameva
nimittamātraṁ bhava savyasācin

You, therefore, arise and win glory and conquering foes, enjoy the affluent kingdom. These warriors stand already slain by Me; be you merely an instrument, O Savyasācin (Savyasācin—One who can shoot arrows with the left hand also). 33

Comment:

'Tasmāttvamuttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva'—The Lord says to Arjuna that he himself has beheld that his rivals will be inevitably slain. So he should gird up his loins and win glory and fame. But he should not regard the victory as the fruit of his efforts otherwise he will be bound (Gītā 5/12) because profit and loss, fame and defame etc., are destined by the Lord. So a man should not get entangled in them.

The expression 'Yaśo labhasva' does not mean that he should get elated by winning fame through victory. He should rather think that his opponents had already been killed by the Lord so the fame was gained as was destined. It was not the result of his efforts otherwise he would be bound.

'Jitvā śatrūnbhuṅkṣva rājyaṁ samṛddham'—An affluent kingdom involves two factors (i) There should be no enemy or rival. (ii) It should be rich and prosperous. The Lord says to Arjuna that after getting victory over his enemies he will enjoy such an affluent kingdom. To enjoy the affluent kingdom does not mean that he should enjoy riches. But it means that the kingdom to which ordinary men are attracted, can be acquired by him easily.

'Mayaivaite nihatāḥ pūrvameva'—

The warriors of Arjuna's hostile army have already been slain by the Lord because their days are numbered.

'Nimittamātram bhava savyasācin' —Arjuna was called 'Savyasācī' because he could shoot arrows with his left hand also. Addressing him by this term the Lord asks him to shoot arrows with both of his hands i.e., he should fight heart and soul with full courage, valour and intelligence carefully by becoming merely His instrument and he should not feel proud of his victory because they have already been slain by Him.

A striver should also apply his intellect and power etc., for God-Realization. But he should not be proud of his resources and devotion etc. He should think that he will attain Him only by His grace. The Lord declares it in the Gītā, "A devotee performing all actions, by My grace, attains the eternal, imperishable Abode" (18/56); "Fixing your mind on Me, you will by My grace overcome all obstacles" (18/58). Thus a striver without having any pride by His grace attains Him. Every person while performing his duty should try his best but he should not be proud of his success in the least. When Lord Kṛṣṇa raised the Govardhana, he asked the cowherds also to support it with their sticks. The cowherds thought that their sticks were supporting the Govardhana, but actually it was the nail of the little finger of the Lord's left hand which supported the Govardhana. When they felt proud, the Lord pulled his finger a little downward and the Govardhana began to slip downward. So all of them cried. "O brother Kṛṣṇa, help us." The Lord asked them to apply their full power. But when they found their efforts futile, the Lord raised it up with His finger. So if a man by becoming an instrument in the Lord's hands without having pride of his power and without having a desire for the fruit of his actions performs his duty, he may attain salvation. A striver meets with failure due to his pride. If he doesn't have pride, he can attain salvation instantly. The pride of his efforts is the stumbling block to this attainment. Therefore the Lord advises Arjuna not to feel proud but regard it as His grace. Whatever is to happen will certainly happen. It can't be checked by a man with his power. So he should remain equanimous in whatever happens as a result of his actions. By doing so he will attain salvation because bondage, damnation to hells and degradation to eighty-four lac species are the result of misdeeds whereas salvation, liberation, beatitude and divine love etc., are natural and self-evident.

द्रोणं च भीष्मं च जयद्रथं च
कर्णं तथान्यानपि योधवीरान्।
मया हतांस्त्वं जहि मा व्यथिष्ठा
युध्यस्व जेतासि रणे सपत्नान्॥ ३४॥

droṇaṁ ca bhīṣmaṁ ca jayadrathaṁ ca
kaṛṇaṁ tathānyānapi yodhavīrān
mayā hatāṁstvaṁ jahi mā vyathiṣṭhā
yudhyasva jetāsi raṇe sapatnān

Slay Droṇa, Bhīṣma, Jayadratha, Karṇa and other brave warriors who stand already killed by Me. Be not distressed with fear. Fight, you will conquer your enemies in battle. 34

Comment:

'Droṇaṁ ca bhīṣmaṁ ca jayadrathaṁ ca karṇaṁ tathānyānapi yodhavīrān mayā hatāṁstvaṁ jahi'—Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorted Arjuna to fight by giving up fear because Droṇa, Bhīṣma, Jayadratha, Karṇa and such other valiant warriors* however formidable they might be stood already slain by Him. So he should get victory over them without being proud of his victory.

'Mā vyathiṣṭhā yudhyasva'—Arjuna considered it sinful to kill his preceptor, Droṇa and patriarch Bhīṣma. So the Lord asks him not to be distressed with fear of violence. He should perform his duty of waging the war as he is a warrior belonging to the warrior class.

'Jetāsi raṇe sapatnān'—Arjuna was not sure whether they would win the war or they would be vanquished by the enemy (Gītā 2/6). So the Lord while revealing His cosmic form to him said to him, "Behold within this body whatever else you desire to see" (11/7). He saw the scene of his victory and the enemy's defeat. Arjuna also beheld Bhīṣma, Droṇa and Karṇa, the valiant warriors of the hostile army rushing headlong into the Lord's body. So He declares that he will conquer his enemies in battle.

An Important Fact

A striver gets discouraged when he finds himself incapable of controlling the worldly temptation and removing evils. So the Lord encourages him by declaring, "Be not distressed with fear. Fight, you will conquer your enemies." So a striver having no pride of his own by depending on the Lord, should perform his duty. If he is worried about them, it means that he has pride of his own. Moreover he should not be worried about the evil thoughts if they come to his mind because they are all perishable and have been destroyed by the Lord. So a striver should not attach importance to them.

"Kill those who stand already killed by Me" — this statement of the Lord arouses a doubt that if someone kills a person it means that he is killed only by the Lord. Thus does the murderer incur no sin? The clarification is that no one is authorized to slay others or to trouble them. He has a right only to serve others and give comfort to them. If he had got the right to kill others, there might have not been any value of sanction and prohibition. So a person who murders others or tortures them certainly incurs sin. But a member of the warrior class, who by giving up pride and selfishness, joins the battle as sanctioned by the scriptures, incurs no sin because it is his duty.

Link:–Beholding the very terrible cosmic form of the Lord, Arjuna asked Him in the thirty-first verse who He was and what He wanted to do. In the thirty-second verse the Lord answered that He was the mighty Time and came to destroy the world. Then in the thirty-third and thirty-fourth verses the Lord asked him to fight, consoling him that he would win because his enemies had already been killed by Him. Sañjaya now reveals to Dhṛtarāṣṭra Arjuna's reaction to the Lord's exhortation.

सञ्जय उवाच

एतच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं केशवस्य
कृताञ्जलिर्वेपमानः किरीटी ।

* Bhīṣma, Karṇa and Droṇa were well-known for the bravery throughout the world. So it was difficult to get victory over them. Jayadratha was not such a valiant warrior, but he was armoured with the boon that he who dropped his severed head on the ground, would have his own head smashed into a hundred pieces.

नमस्कृत्वा भूय एवाह कृष्णं
सगद्गदं भीतभीतः प्रणम्य ॥ ३५ ॥

śañjaya uvāca
etacchrutvā vacanaṁ keśavasya
kṛtāñjalirvepamānaḥ kirīṭī
namaskṛtvā bhūya evāha kṛṣṇam
sagadgadaṁ bhītabhītaḥ praṇamya

Sañjaya said:

Having heard these words of Lord Keśava, the crowned one (Arjuna) with joined palms, trembling, prostrating himself again addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa, in a choked voice bowing down, overwhelmed with fear. 35

Comment:

'Etacchrutvā vacanaṁ keśavasya kṛtāñjalirvepamānaḥ kirīṭī'—Arjuna was terror-struck after beholding the Lord's terrible cosmic form. He was more terrified when the Lord declared that He was the mighty Time Who would destroy all the warriors. So he began to tremble and bowed to Him with joined palms.

Arjuna helped Indra, the king of the gods by killing the demons Kāla and Khañja etc. As a token of his pleasure Indra placed a divine diadem (Kirīṭa), possessing the brilliance of the sun, on his head. So Arjuna is called 'Kirīṭī' viz., the crowned one. Here the same Arjuna who helped Indra by killing huge demons was trembling with fear.

'Namaskṛtvā bhūya evāha kṛṣṇaṁ sagadgadaṁ bhītabhītaḥ praṇamya'—Time is the Lord's destroying power which devours all beings without exception every time. When Arjuna beheld very terrible form of the Lord, he thought that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the master of that Time (Death) which devours the entire universe. So except Him there is no saviour to protect him from the clutches of Time (Death). So Arjuna bowed down to Him again and again.

'Bhūya'—By this term Sañjaya means to say that from the fifteenth verse to the thirty-first verse Arjuna offered praises to the Lord and bowed to Him and now again he begins to offer his praises to Him and bows to Him.

The voice gets faltered and choked out of fear as well as joy. If Arjuna had been too much terrified he could not have uttered words. It shows that Arjuna was not too much terrified.

अर्जुन उवाच
स्थाने हृषीकेश तव प्रकीर्त्या
जगत्प्रहृष्यत्यनुरज्यते च ।
रक्षांसि भीतानि दिशो द्रवन्ति
सर्वे नमस्यन्ति च सिद्धसङ्घाः ॥ ३६ ॥

arjuna uvāca
sthāne hṛṣīkeśa tava prakīrtyā
jagatprahṛṣyatyanurajyate ca
rakṣāṁsi bhītāni diśo dravanti
sarve namasyanti ca siddhasaṅghāḥ

Arjuna said:

O Lord, it is but meet that the universe exults and is filled with love by chanting Your names and glory; terrified demons are fleeing in all directions and all the hosts of siddhas (Perfected souls) are bowing to you. 36

Comment:

[It is observed that a man being overwhelmed with terror can't speak. But Arjuna though terrified is offering praises to the Lord from the thirty-sixth verse to the forty-sixth verse. How? The answer is that after beholding the cosmic form of the Lord, Arjuna was terrified as well as delighted as he himself says, "I feel delighted that I have seen what was never seen before; at the same time my mind is confounded with fear" (11/45). It proves that Arjuna was not so much overwhelmed with terror that he could not offer praises to the Lord.]

'Hṛṣīkeśa'—'Hṛṣīka' means senses and 'Īśa' means master, so 'Hṛṣīkeśa' means the Lord of the senses viz., God. It means that the Lord is the conductor of senses and mind etc.

'Tava prakīrtyā jagatprahṛṣyatyanurajyate ca'—The people of the world by having a disinclination for the world chant the names and glory of the Lord, narrate His character sketch and listen to it. By doing so they are delighted. It means that the people by having an inclination for the world, develop attachment, aversion and burning sensation etc., while by chanting the Lord's names and glories they attain peace and delight.

When the Lord incarnates, all the sentient and insentient beings such as gods, human beings, sages, birds, beasts, trees, plants, rivers and streams etc., are delighted. Similarly all of them are delighted by chanting the Lord's names and glories. When they get delighted by chanting His name and glories i.e., their minds get engrossed in Him, then they develop devotion to Him.

'Rakṣāṁsi bhītāni diśo dravanti'—All the demons, giants, ghosts and evil spirits etc., flee in different directions out of fear when the Lord's names and glories are chanted*. They flee due to their own sins, not due to hearing the Lord's names and glories.

It is because of their sins that their ears can't hear the most pious and auspicious names and glories of the Lord. But if they stay there and listen to His names and glories they become free from their base life and attain salvation.

'Sarve namasyanti ca siddhasaṅghāḥ'—The perfected souls, saints and strivers by chanting the Lord's names and glories and listening to His sports bow to Him.

All these scenes and sports are being revealed by the Lord in His divine cosmic form.

'Sthāne'—Arjuna shows propriety of the above mentioned actions of beings because an inclination for the Lord leads to peace and bliss while a disinclination for Him leads to disquietude and distresses. It means that a being (Spirit) is a portion of the Lord and so he is delighted by having an inclination for Him, and such qualities as peace, forgiveness and politeness are revealed in him. But if he goes astray, he has to face adversity. This is quite proper.

The man (soul) is a fragment of the Lord. But having an inclination for Matter, he has a desire for prosperity and pleasures. The more he tries to gain them, the more entangled he gets in disquietude, adversity and burning sensation etc. But when by having a disinclination for the world, he starts moving towards the Lord, he starts attaining bliss and his sorrows diminish.

Link:–Arjuna justifies the propriety of the term 'Sthāne' used in the preceding verse, in the next four verses and offers repeated salutations to the Lord.

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* The places, where people don't chant and listen to the Lord's names, glories and sports which dispel fear of demons, are haunted by ogresses (Śrīmadbhā. 10/6/3).

कस्माच्च ते न नमेरन्महात्मन्
गरीयसे ब्रह्मणोऽप्यादिकर्त्रे ।
अनन्त देवेश जगन्निवास
त्वमक्षरं सदसत्तत्परं यत् ॥ ३७ ॥

kasmācca te na nameranmahātman
garīyase brahmaṇo'pyādikartre
ananta deveśa jagannivāsa
tvamakṣaraṁ sadasattatparaṁ yat

O Great souled one, why should they not bow to You, the greatest of all, the progenitor even of Brahmā ? O Infinite Being, O Lord of the gods, O Abode of the universe, You are the Imperishable. You are the being (real) the non-being (unreal) and also that which is beyond both being and non-being viz., the Imperishable Brahma. 37

Comment:

'Kasmācca te na nameranmahātman garīyase brahmaṇopyādikartre'—The Lord is the progenitor not only of the universe but of Brahmā Himself who created it. Thus being the greatest and the best of all the worldly things & persons etc. He deserves the homage of all. Homage is paid to two kinds of persons (i) Preceptors (ii) Parents, grand parents and elders. The Lord is the preceptor * and father of Brahmā, the creator of the universe.

'Ananta'—The Lord is infinite because He transcends time, space and intellect etc. He has no beginning and end. His forms and glories are also infinite.

'Deveśa'—He is the Lord of all the gods who are known such as Indra, the king of the gods and Varuṇa, the deity of the waters etc., as well as those who are unknown; their destiny is shaped by Him and He controls all of them.

'Jagannivāsa'—The Lord is the Abode of the infinite universes because all of them are held in one of His limbs. In spite of it, that limb is not fully occupied, it still remains vacant.

'Tvamakṣaraṁ sadasattatparaṁ yat'—The Lord is the Imperishable †. He is the real which never ceases to be and He is also the unreal which has no existence and He is also the Absolute, the Transcendental Who is beyond the power of senses, mind and intellect and can't be described in anyway.

It means that He is the best, the greatest and the Supreme Being.

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराण-
स्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।
वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम
त्वया ततं विश्वमनन्तरूप ॥ ३८ ॥

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* Sage Patañjali has said, "The Lord is the preceptor of even Brahmā who emanated from Him first of all" (Yoga darśana 1/26).

† In the first verse of the eighth chapter Arjuna asked, "What is Brahma ?" The Lord answered, "The Supreme Imperishable is Brahma." Similarly Arjuna called Him the Imperishable in (11/18) and also in this verse.

tavamādidevaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇa-
stvamasya viśvasya paraṁ nidhānam
vettāsi vedyaṁ ca paraṁ ca dhāma
tvayā tataṁ viśvamanantarūpa

You are the Primal Deity, the most ancient person; You are the ultimate Resort of the universe; You are the knower, the knowable and the Supreme Abode. This universe is pervaded by You, O Being of infinite forms. 38

Comment:

'Tvamādidevaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ'— The Lord is the Primal Deity because He is the source of everything sentient and insentient. He is called the most ancient Person because He is the source of the entire creation and is everlasting.

'Tvamasya viśvasya paraṁ nidhānam'—He is the ultimate resort of the universe because the entire universe emanates from Him, abides in Him and merges in Him.

'Vettāsi'—It is He Who possesses real and full knowledge of the past, the present and the future and there is none who can be equal to Him in knowledge.

'Vedyam'—He is the only knowable object by the scriptures and the saints and His knowledge is the highest goal of human life.

'Paraṁ dhāma'—He is the Supreme Abode, attaining Whom there is no return and nothing remains to be done, to be known and to be acquired. This Supreme Abode is also called salvation or the Supreme State etc.

'Anantarūpa'—His forms which He revealed in His cosmic body are infinite.

'Tvayā tataṁ viśvam'—The entire universe is pervaded by Him, He permeates every particle of the universe.

वायुर्यमोऽग्निर्वरुणः शशाङ्कः
प्रजापतिस्त्वं प्रपितामहश्च ।
नमो नमस्तेऽस्तु सहस्रकृत्वः
पुनश्च भूयोऽपि नमो नमस्ते ॥ ३९ ॥

vāyuryamo'gnirvaruṇaḥ śaśāṅkaḥ
prajāpatistvaṁ prapitāmahaśca
namo namaste'stu sahasrakṛtvaḥ
punaśca bhūyo'pi namo namaste

You are Wind-god, God of death, Fire-god, God of water, Moon-god, Prajāpati, Father of Brahmā, and Great-grand-father of beings. Salutation, salutation to you a thousand times, and again and again salutation to you. 39

Comment:

'Vāyuḥ'—The Lord is the Wind-god who gives life breath and energy to all beings.

'Yamaḥ'—The Lord is the god of death and the entire universe is controlled by him.

'Agniḥ'—He is the Fire-god who gives light, fire and heat and digests food.

'Varuṇaḥ'—The Lord is the god of water without which life is impossible.

'Śaśāṅkaḥ'—The Lord is the moon which nourishes plants, herbs and vegetation.

'Prajāpati'—He is Dakṣa Prajāpati who created the universe.

'Prapitāmahaḥ'—Brahmā is the grand-father of all beings because he is the father of Dakṣa Prajāpati who created

the universe. God is the creator of Brahmā, so He is the great grandfather of all beings.

'Namo namaste'stu sahasrakṛtvaḥ punaśca bhūyo'pi namo namaste'— The Lord Himself is god Indra and He is also other gods. He possesses infinite forms. How can Arjuna describe His merits and glories? He can do nothing besides bowing to Him again and again.

A striver is responsible to perform his duty only so long as he depends on his power i.e., he is proud of his power. But when he is unable to perform it, he only bows to the Lord i.e., he surrenders himself to the Lord and then the full responsibility goes to the Lord and he performs the duty only as His instrument without having any responsibility of his own.

नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते
नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व।
अनन्तवीर्यामितविक्रमस्त्वं
सर्वं समाप्नोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः॥ ४०॥

namaḥ purastādatha pṛṣṭhataste
namos'tu te sarvata eva sarva
anantavīryāmitavikramastvaṁ
sarvaṁ samāpnoṣi tato'si sarvaḥ

O Lord of infinite prowess, my salutations to You from before, from behind and from all sides. O All ! You Who possess limitless might, pervade all; therefore you are all. 40

Comment:

'Namaḥ purastādatha pṛṣṭhataste namos'tu te sarvata eva sarva'— Being horror-struck Arjuna is unable to think what to say and so he bows to the Lord and offers Him salutations from all quarters.

'Anantavīryāmitavikramastvam'— The Lord possesses infinite prowess and might which is beyond the conception of any mortal.

'Sarvaṁ samāpnoṣi tato'si sarvaḥ'— He pervades the entire universe, there is no atom in the universe which is devoid of Him.

Arjuna beholds that the Lord pervades infinite universes and infinite universes abide in one of His limbs.

Link:—Arjuna in the next two verses prays to the Lord to forgive him for the offences committed by him because he did not know Him in His true perspective.

सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं
हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति।
अजानता महिमानं तवेदं
मया प्रमादात्प्रणयेन वापि॥ ४१॥

यच्चावहासार्थमसत्कृतोऽसि
विहारशय्यासनभोजनेषु ।
एकोऽथवाप्यच्युत तत्समक्षं
तत्क्षामये त्वामहमप्रमेयम् ॥ ४२ ॥

sakheti matvā prasabhaṁ yaduktaṁ
he kṛṣṇa he yādava he sakheti
ajānatā mahimānaṁ tavedaṁ
mayā pramādātpraṇayena vāpi
yaccāvahāsārthamasatkṛto'si
vihāraśayyāsanabhojaneṣu
eko'thavāpyacyuta tatsamakṣaṁ
tatkṣāmaye tvāmahamaprameyam

Whatever I have rashly said due to carelessness or love, addressing You as "O Kṛṣṇa, O Yādava, O Friend", thinking You only a friend, ignorant of Your greatness; and the way in which You have been slighted by me in jest while playing, reposing, sitting or dining either alone or in company — I crave forgiveness from You Who are infinite, O infallible Lord. 41-42

Comment:

[Having beheld the terrible form of the Lord when Arjuna is terrorstruck, he forgets that He is Śrī Kṛṣṇa and so he asks Him Who He is. But when he regains his memory, he comes to know that He is the same Lord Kṛṣṇa, his friend. So he prays to Lord Kṛṣṇa to forgive him for his past offences .]

'Sakheti matvā prasabhaṁ yaduktaṁ he kṛṣṇa he yādava he sakheti ajānatā mahimānaṁ tavedaṁ mayā pramādātpraṇayena vāpi'—Those who are venerable are not called by personal names. They are addressed as your highness, your honour or sire or sir, etc. Arjuna did not pay due regard and reverence to Kṛṣṇa Who was no other than the Lord Himself. He did not know Him and His glory in reality. So he instead of addressing Him as sir or sire etc., addressed Him in a familiar friendly way as 'Kṛṣṇa' or 'friend' due to carelessness or love. Arjuna knew the Lord's real self and His glories to some extent because he rejecting the powerful Nārāyaṇī army (consisting of 1,09,350 foot-soldiers, 65,610 horses, 21,870 chariots and 21,870 elephants) opted for Him Who would remain unarmed in the war. But he did not know that the Lord holds infinite universes in one of His limbs and His glories are infinite. So he realized that he was an ordinary mortal while the Lord is the greatest master of even gods and His merits are numberless. In fact no one can know the glory of the Lord in its entirety. It is infinite. In case it is known, it becomes finite. When even the glories emanating from His power are countless, how can His own glories be finite and be counted and grasped ?

'Yaccāvahāsārthamasatkṛto'si vihāraśayyāsanabhojaneṣu eko'thavāpyacyuta tatsamakṣaṁ tatkṣāmaye tvāmahamaprameyam'—Arjuna realized that he by regarding the Lord as his equal and friend had slighted and insulted Him, the Infinite, in jest while playing, reposing, sitting or dining either alone or in company and it was quite improper and unseemly on his part to do so. So he humbly sought His pardon for his past misbehaviour.

Arjuna and Lord Kṛṣṇa were indeed very intimate friends. Both of them were very frank

with each other while playing; bathing, reposing, sitting or dining etc. So Arjuna did not behave with decorum and poked fun at him. Arjuna addressed the Lord as infinite because He was beyond the limit of even the divine eye.

Link:–In the next two verses Arjuna describing His glories pleads for forgiveness again.

पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य
त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गरीयान्।
न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो
लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव ॥ ४३ ॥

pitāsi lokasya carācarasya
tvamasya pūjyaśca gururgarīyān
na tvatsamo'styabhyadhikaḥ kuto'nyo
lokatraye'pyapratimaprabhāva

You are the Father, also the Great Teacher of this animate and inanimate creation and supremely adorable. O Lord, possessing incomparable glory, in the three worlds, there is no one even equal to You; who can then excel You? 43

Comment:

'Pitāsi lokasya carācarasya tvamasya pūjyaśca gururgarīyān'— He is the father of human beings, birds, beasts and all other animate and inanimate beings in infinite universes, because all the beings emanate from Him and are sustained by Him. He is also the greatest teacher because He is adored even by gods and teachers and is the source of all knowledge.

'Na tvatsamo'styabhyadhikaḥ kuto'nyo lokatraye'pyapratima-prabhāva'—There neither is nor can be any one equal to the Lord. The Lord's power is incomparable. Then how can any one excel him?

तस्मात्प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं
प्रसादये त्वामहमीशमीड्यम्।
पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः
प्रियः प्रियायार्हसि देव सोढुम् ॥ ४४ ॥

tasmātpraṇamya praṇidhāya kāyaṁ
prasādaye tvāmahamīśamīḍyam
piteva putrasya sakheva sakhyuḥ
priyaḥ priyāyārhasi deva soḍhum

Therefore, O adorable Lord, bowing down, prostrating my body I implore You to forgive me. Bear with me, O Lord as a father with a son, as a friend with a friend, as a lover with his beloved. 44

Comment:

'Tasmātpraṇamya praṇidhāya kāyaṁ prasādaye tvāmahamīśa-mīḍyam'—He is the Lord of infinite universes possessing infinite attributes and glories. Arjuna says to Lord Kṛṣṇa when even the great sages, saints and gods who always offer praises to Him, can't know His infinite glories, how can he offer praises to Him? So he can merely bow down and prostrate his body at His feet in order to please Him.

'Piteva putrasya sakheva sakhyuḥ priyaḥ priyāyārhasi deva soḍhum'—Three factors are responsible for insulting a person (i) Negligence (ii) Fun (iii) Intimacy. As a child sitting on the lap of its father pulls the beard and the moustaches of its father and even slaps him, yet the father is pleased with it. He has not the least feeling that the child is slighting and insulting him. A friend is very frank with his intimate friend and insults him in jest while playing, reposing, sitting or dining etc., while his friend takes it lightly regarding it as a fun. A husband condones the lapses of his wife because of their intimacy. So Arjuna prays to Lord Kṛṣṇa to forgive all his faults in the same way as a father or a friend or a husband does for his son or friend or wife.

In the forty-first and forty-second verses Arjuna explained that negligence, intimacy and fun are the three factors which contribute to an offence of slight. So here by citing the examples of father and son, friend and friend, husband and wife Arjuna clarifies the above mentioned three factors respectively.

Eleven kinds of sentiments in the eleventh chapter

In the eleventh chapter there is description of eleven sentiments. In the Lord's divine form there is sentimnt of serenity (11/15-18), in the cosmic form there is sentiment of wonder (11/20); in the terrible form in which people are being destroyed, there is sentiment of wrath (11/30-32); in the vast and terrible form having fearful tusks, resembling the raging fire there is sentiment of disgust (11/23-25); when Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to arise for battle, there is sentiment of bravery (11/33); when Arjuna bows down and prostrates his body, there is the sentiment of service (11/44); when Arjuna beholds warriors entering the Lord's mouth with great rapidity for destruction, there is sentiment of pity (11/28-29); when Arjuna prays to Lord Kṛṣṇa to forgive his faults by giving illustrations of a father, a friend and a husband there are the sentiments of affection, friendship and conjugal love respectively (11/44) and when Arjuna thinks of the way in which he might have insulted Lord Kṛṣṇa in jest there is the sentiment of humour (11/42).

Link:–Arjuna in the next two verses prays to the Lord to reveal His four-armed form.

अदृष्टपूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा
भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे ।
तदेव मे दर्शय देवरूपं
प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥ ४५ ॥

adṛṣṭapūrvaṁ hṛṣito'smi dṛṣṭvā
bhayena ca pravyathitaṁ mano me
tadeva me darśaya devarūpaṁ
prasīda deveśa jagannivāsa

I rejoice that I have seen what was never seen before but my mind is confounded with fear. Reveal to me that divine form (the placid form of Viṣṇu), O Lord of the gods, O Abode of the universe, be gracious. 45

Comment:

[When Arjuna prayed to the Lord to reveal to him His cosmic form, He revealed it to him. So having faith in His grace he prays to him to reveal to him His divine form.]

'Adṛṣṭapūrvaṁ hṛṣito'smi dṛṣṭvā bhayena ca pravyathitaṁ mano me'—When Arjuna had a vision of the Lord's cosmic form, his joy knew no bounds and he considered himself very much fortunate because the Lord by His infinite compassion had revealed to him that form. But when he beheld the terrible phase of that cosmic form, he trembled with fear.

'Tadeva me darśaya deva rūpaṁ prasīda deveśa jagannivāsa'—The term 'Tat' (that) denotes that Arjuna in the past had a vision of that divine form which is now out of sight. When Arjuna beheld the Lord's cosmic form, he saw Brahmā seated on the lotus-seat (11/15). It indicates that he also beheld Lord Viṣṇu from whose navel the lotus sprang. Then Arjuna in the seventeenth verse said, "I see you with diadem, club, discus ('Ca' denotes conch and lotus)". It shows that Arjuna had a vision of the divine form * (four-armed Lord) also within that cosmic form.

The term 'Deva rūpam' refers to the four-armed divine form which he saw within the Lord's cosmic form. Secondly in the fifteenth verse Arjuna addressed the Lord as 'Deva' (God) (Divinity) which means that Arjuna prayed to Him to reveal to him neither the cosmic form nor the human form but the four-armed form.

'Prasīda devesa jagannivāsa'—Here the term 'Jagannivāsa' denotes the cosmic form while 'Deveśa' refers to His four-armed form. Arjuna by using the term 'Jagannivāsa' means to say that His cosmic form which is the abode of the universes has already been seen by him and he is still beholding it. But he prays to Him to reveal to him His divine form (Deveśa viz., the Lord of the gods).

An Important Fact

The cosmic form of the Lord is divine, imperishable and eternal. In this form there are infinite universes; and Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva who create, preserve and destroy these universes are also infinite. Infinite universes emanate from this form and again merge in it, yet it remains the same without any modification. It is so singular that the effulgence of a thousand suns blazing forth all at once can't be compared with its splendour (11/12). This form can be seen only with the divine eye. With the eye of knowledge one perceives existence of the Lord Who is the origin of the universe; with the emotional eye one beholds the universe as the manifestation of the Lord but one can't have a vision of the cosmic form of the Lord with these eyes. As far as human eyes are concerned with them one can perceive the universe neither as originated from the Lord, nor as His manifestation nor His cosmic form because eyes being evolutes of Matter can't perceive objects beyond it.

Various forms of the Lord whether they are two-armed, four-armed or a million-armed are divine and imperishable and same is the case whether He is formless attributeless or with form and attributes etc.

In His sport of love the Lord possesses only two-arms but when He wants to reveal his glory, He reveals his cosmic form to a devotee as He revealed to Arjuna in a limb of his human body.

The Lord possesses infinite divine virtues such as glory, beauty, generosity and grace etc., and He reveals Himself with those virtues to His devotees in His cosmic form. The Lord bestows the divine eye upon His devotees and enables them to behold the different aspects of His form according to

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* The Lord in the forty-ninth verse by the term 'Punaḥ' (again) and 'Tadeva' (even that) and Sañjaya in the fiftieth verse by the term 'Bhūyaḥ' (again) mention the same divine four-armed form (seen in the cosmic form).

their tastes and eligibility. In the eleventh chapter also the Lord revealed first His divine form (11/15-18), then the terrible form (11/19-22) and then the most terrible form (11/23-30). When Arjuna was terrified by having a vision of His most terrible form, the Lord ceased revealing other aspects of His cosmic form. It means that the Lord revealed to Arjuna the aspects of His cosmic form according to his need and eligibility.

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रहस्त-
मिच्छामि त्वां द्रष्टुमहं तथैव ।
तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन
सहस्रबाहो भव विश्वमूर्ते ॥ ४६ ॥

kirīṭinaṁ gadinaṁ cakrahasta-
micchāmi tvāṁ draṣṭumahaṁ tathaiva
tenaiva rūpeṇa caturbhujena*
sahasrabāho bhava viśvamūrte

I wish to see You as before, crowned, holding a mace and a discus in two of Your hands, in Your former form only, having four-arms, O thousand-armed, O Universal Form. 46

Comment:

'Kirīṭinaṁ gadinaṁ cakrahasta-micchāmi tvāṁ draṣṭumahaṁ tathaiva' —Arjuna desired to see the Lord crowned, holding a mace and a discus i.e., the Lord's four-armed divine form.

By using the term 'Tathaiva' Arjuna means to say that when he expressed his wish to see His cosmic form, He revealed that form to him (11/3). So now he wants to see His four-armed divine form only which he saw in His cosmic form.

'Tenaiva rūpeṇa caturbhujena sahasrabāho bhava viśvamūrte'— The term 'Eva' (only) has been used for the negation of the cosmic form mentioned in the fifteenth and the seventeenth verses, the expression 'Tena caturbhujena rūpeṇa' for the four-armed form and the term 'Bhava' for 'be' or 'appear.' In the previous verse the term, 'Tadeva' and in this verse the terms 'Tathaiva' and 'Tenaiva' indicate that Arjuna was very much terrified of the cosmic form and so he uttered the term 'Eva' (only) three times to express his desire to have a vision of His four-armed form only. Arjuna did not want to see the four-armed form in the cosmic form.

Arjuna addresses the Lord as 'Sahasrabāho' (a thousand-armed) to pray to Him to withdraw that cosmic form and become only four-armed while the vocative 'Viśvamūrte' (Universal Form) indicates that Arjuna wanted the Lord to withdraw His cosmic form and become four-armed Viṣṇu.

Link:–In the thirty-first verse Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa Who He was, so fierce in form. Lord Kṛṣṇa replied that He was the mighty world-destroying Time, then engaged in wiping out the world. Hearing this reply and beholding the Lord's terrible cosmic form, Arjuna thought that He was very angry. So Arjuna prayed to Him again and again to be pleased with him. The Lord utters the next verse in order to remove his misconception.

* The terms 'Idam' denotes nearness, 'Etat' denotes much nearness, 'Adas' denotes distance and 'Tat' denotes invisibility (out of sight). For the Lord's cosmic form, the term 'Idam' has been used in the eighteenth and the nineteenth verses for Bhīṣma and Drona etc., who were very near, the term 'Etat' has been used in the thirty-third verse for the gods etc., seen in the cosmic body at a far distance, the term 'Adas' has been used in the twenty-first, twenty-sixth and twenty-eighth verses and for the four-armed form of Lord Viṣṇu seen in the first phase of the cosmic form (being out of sight at that time) the term 'Tat' has been used.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुनेदं
रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात् ।
तेजोमयं विश्वमनन्तमाद्यं
यन्मे त्वदन्येन न दृष्टपूर्वम् ॥ ४७ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

mayā prasannena tavārjunedaṁ
rūpaṁ paraṁ darśitamātmayogāt
tejomayaṁ viśvamanantamādyaṁ
yanme tvadanyena na dṛṣṭapūrvam

The Blessed Lord said:

Arjuna, being pleased with you, I have shown you through My own power of Yoga, this supreme, shining primal and infinite Universal Form, which none but you has ever seen. 47

Comment:

'Mayā prasannena tavārjunedaṁ rūpaṁ darśitam'—O Arjuna! You are time and again saying "Be kind to me" (11/25,31, 45). But I have neither revealed to you this terrible cosmic form out of anger to frighten you nor because of your qualifications, deserving nature or devotion. It was because of your desire to behold My universal form that I by My grace bestowed upon you the divine eye to have a vision of this form. It means that it was only out of compassion that being pleased with you, I enabled you to behold My cosmic form. Your desire is merely an instrument.

At the end of the tenth chapter in the forty-first verse, I told you wherever any excellence is seen, that is My glory . Thus I finished My reply to your question. In the last verse of the tenth chapter of my own initiative I told you "You need not know much, whatever is seen or heard or grasped in the world, that comes within a fragment of My body." Further I told you "You need not know My glories and divine power when the base of all glories and divine power, I Myself am standing before you." I told you all these things out of My special divine grace. Then you expressed your desire to behold the cosmic form and I revealed it to you by blessing you with the divine eye. This is out of My pleasure and grace only. Therefore you need not fear at all.

'Ātmayogāt'—I have revealed to you this universal form through My own power of Yoga.

'Param'—This cosmic form is supreme.

'Tejomayam'—This form is very shining and effulgent. So you said that it was hard to look at even with the divine eye (11/17).

'Viśvam'—This universal form of Mine is all-pervading and you yourself have addressed Me as 'Viśvarūpa' and 'Viśvamūrte' (Universal Form).

'Anantamādyam'—This universal form of Mine is without beginning and end, because it is primal and without cause.

'Yanme tvadanyena na dṛṣṭapūrvam'—None besides you has ever seen this universal form. Now a question rises why the Lord has made this statement when this form was revealed to Rāma's mother Kausalyā, Kṛṣṇa's mother Yaśodā and also Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Sañjaya Vidura etc., in the court of the Kauravas, by Him. The answer is that the cosmic form revealed to Arjuna was very terrible and many valiant warriors and commanders etc., were entering the Lord's blazing mouths

headlong and therefore it was quite different from what the Lord had revealed to Kausalyā, Yaśodā and also in the court of the Kauravas.

Secondly on the battle-field it was inevitable to reveal such a terrible cosmic form to the warrior, Arjuna, while there was no need to reveal the terrible form to Yaśodā and Kausalyā etc., nor were they capable of beholding that form.

The Lord declared that none besides him had ever seen His universal form but He did not say that none besides Arjuna was beholding that form at that time because Sañjaya was also beholding that form. Therefore he declares, "Recalling that wonderous cosmic form of Lord Kṛṣṇa, great is my wonder and I rejoice again and again" (18/77).

An Important Fact

Lord Kṛṣṇa declared, "O Arjuna, being pleased with you, I have shown you this universal form." It shows that the Lord is much more gracious than a striver regards Him to be. His grace is infinite while a man's power to admit His grace is limited.

Generally a striver in favourable circumstances thinks that the Lord is gracious to him and he becomes pleased. But the fact is that the Lord showers His grace equally on a striver in favourable as well as unfavourable circumstances. So he should perceive His grace in all the circumstances and should neither limit it to favourable circumstances nor enjoy it.

Attachment to happiness also binds a striver (Gītā 14/6) because it is an obstacle to the attainment of the state which transcends the three Guṇās (Modes of Nature). So a striver should not enjoy the happiness which is derived out of the spiritual discipline. He should rather remain engaged in the discipline scrupulously. By doing so in the course of time he will have disinclination for that happiness. But if a striver cautiously remains detached from that happiness, he can attain the Supreme Bliss instantly.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord explains that besides His grace there is no other means to have a vision of His cosmic form.

न वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैर्न दानै-
र्न च क्रियाभिर्न तपोभिरुग्रैः ।
एवंरूपः शक्य अहं नृलोके
द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर ॥ ४८ ॥

na vedayajñādhyayanairna dānai-
rna ca kriyābhirna tapobhirugraiḥ
evaṁrūpaḥ śakya aham nṛloke
draṣṭuṁ tvadanyena kurupravīra

Arjuna, in this mortal world I cannot be seen in this form by any one else than you, either by the study of the Vedas or of rituals or by gifts, sacrifices or austere penances. 48

Comment:

'Kurupravīra'—The Lord addresses Arjuna as 'Kurupravīra' (Great hero of the Kurus) because among all the Kurus he was the noblest as it was only he who was curious to listen to the gospel of the Gītā, to have a vision of His cosmic form and to know Him in reality. One who wants to see Him and to know Him is noble.

'Na vedayajñādhyayanairna

dānairna ca kriyābhirna tapobhirugraiḥ'—The study of the Vedas, the performance of sacrifices with due ceremony enjoined by the scriptures, offering charity, observing fast, undergoing severe bodily and mental sufferings as austere penances etc., can't enable a man to behold the Lord's cosmic form, because all of them have a beginning and an end. Thus their fruit is also perishable. How then can they enable a man to behold the Lord's cosmic form which is infinite, imperishable eternal and divine ? The eternal form can be beheld only by His grace because His grace is also eternal.

In the Gītā generally there is description of sacrifice, charity and penance. In the twenty-eighth verse of the eighth chapter and in the fifty-third verse of this chapter there is description of the study of the Vedas, performance of sacrifices, offering charities and undergoing penances. In addition to these four in this verse there is description of actions also. In the twenty-eighth verse of the eighth chapter there is the use of seventh inflexion and plural number, in other cases generally there is the use of first inflexion and plural number while in this verse there is use of third inflexion and plural number, which means that the practice of each of the above mentioned means or even all the means together can't be conducive to the vision of the Lord's cosmic form. The reason is that the vision of His cosmic form is not the fruit of any action.

As by these meritorious deeds a man can't be qualified to have a vision of the Lord's cosmic form, similarly His four-armed form can't be beheld by these means, (11/53), it can be seen only by exclusive devotion (11/54). Even the gods are always eager to behold it. But there is a difference between the two forms. By having a vision of the four-armed form a devotee can develop love and devotion for the Lord but by beholding the cosmic form he is terrified and so he can't develop love and devotion. Therefore the four-armed form can be seen by unswerving devotion while the cosmic form can be beheld only by His grace.

'Evaṁ rūpaḥ śakya aham nṛloke draṣṭum tvadanyena'—It does not mean that Arjuna could behold the cosmic form of the Lord by any means such as the study of the Vedas or by rituals or by gifts, sacrifices or austere penances. But it means that this form can be seen only by His grace.

Sañjaya had also a vision of the Lord's cosmic form, but that was also possible by the divine vision offered to him by sage Vyāsa's grace. It means that the grace of the Lord, saints and devotees is more significant than the meritorious acts of strivers. They shower their grace on all of us without any reason.

Some people have a misconception that the Lord did not reveal His cosmic form to Arjuna but He only told him that infinite universes hang in a limb of His cosmic body. But actually it is not so. The Lord Himself asked Arjuna," Behold within this cosmic body of Mine the entire creation" (11/7). When Arjuna in spite of his best efforts could not behold it, Lord Kṛṣṇa said to him, "You cannot see Me with these gross eyes of yours; therefore I vouchsafe to you the divine eye" (11/8). Then the Lord, by bestowing upon Arjuna the divine eye, revealed to him His cosmic form. Sañjaya also said, "Arjuna saw in the body of that Supreme Deity, comprised in one limb, the whole universe with its manifold divisions" (11/13). Arjuna also having a vision of the Lord's cosmic form said, "I behold in Your body all the gods and multitudes of different beings, Brahmā perched on his lotus-seat, Śiva, all the sages and celestial serpents" (11/15). Thus we see that Lord Kṛṣṇa by granting the divine eye revealed to Arjuna His cosmic form. It was not by the eye of wisdom that he perceived Him (Gītā 13/34; 15/11), it was only by divine eye that he beheld Him. The reason is that by the eye of wisdom one can distinguish the real from the unreal but it is only by the divine eye that one can behold Him.

Link:–Lord Kṛṣṇa in the next verse orders Arjuna to behold His divine form in order to remove his fear.

मा ते व्यथा मा च विमूढभावो
दृष्ट्वा रूपं घोरमीदृङ्ममेदम्।
व्यपेतभीः प्रीतमनाः पुनस्त्वं
तदेव मे रूपमिदं प्रपश्य॥ ४९॥

mā te vyathā mā ca vimūḍhabhāvo
dṛṣṭvā rūpaṁ ghoramīdṛṅmamedam
vyapetabhīḥ prītamanāḥ punastvaṁ
tadeva me rūpamidaṁ prapaśya

Seeing such a dreadful form of Mine, be neither afraid nor bewildered; with a fearless and complacent mind, behold once again the same four-armed from of Mine. 49

Comment:

'Mā te vyathā mā ca vimūḍhabhāvo dṛṣṭvā rūpaṁ ghoramīdṛṅmamedam'—Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that seeing His dreadful form with mouths terrible with tusks, in which the chief warriors are rushing headlong and some are seen sticking in the gaps between the teeth, with their heads crushed, and He devouring all the worlds with His flaming mouths, licking them on all sides, he should neither be afraid nor bewildered but he should rather be pleased. It means that it was proper on his part to feel delighted as he had felt (11/45) by thinking of the grace instead of being bewildered.

Arjuna had said 'I am terrorstruck' (11/23) and 'I am terrified at heart' (11/24). So in response to Arjuna's feeling of terror Lord Kṛṣṇa says,"Don't be terrified."

The Lord revealed to him His cosmic form by being kind to him, so he should not be bewildered. Secondly He was already pleased with him, so his request to seek His pleasure was nothing else besides delusion; he should renounce this delusion. Thirdly he said that his delusion had disappeared (11/1) but actually it had not disappeared. So he should renounce his delusion and being fearless and pleased, should behold His divine form. As there was no change * in Him in all the circumstances, while driving his horses, or talking or revealing the cosmic form, he should also not undergo any change after beholding His cosmic form.

The Lord further said to Arjuna that he was terrified and bewildered because of his egoism, and mineness. It was sheer foolishness. So he should be free from this foolishness. It is because of these demoniac traits a man wants to maintain the perishable things and persons etc. But those having a spiritual inclination behold the Lord pervading everywhere and so become fearless. Beholding the Nṛsiṁha (Head of a lion and the remaining body of a man) incarnation of the Lord when even the gods were terrified, Prahlāda was not afraid because he beheld Him pervading eveywhere. So he fell at His feet and He put him on His lap and began to lick him.

'Vyapetabhīḥ prītamanāḥ punastvaṁ tadeva me rūpamidaṁ prapaśya'—Arjuna in the forty-fifth verse said, "My mind is confused by fear." So here the Lord says to him, "Be fearless and have a complacent mind."

* Though Arjuna finds change in him yet he thinks that the Lord is uniform and never undergoes any change. So he addresses Him as 'Acyuta' in the beginning, the middle and the end (Gītā 1/21, 11/42 and 18/73).

The Lord uses the term 'Punaḥ' (Again) asking Arjuna to behold again the same four-armed form which he had seen in His cosmic body, and the terms 'Tadeva' (that very) and 'Idam' (this) to indicate that he should behold that very form very carefully.

How Long did Sañjaya and Arjuna have that divine vision?

Sañjaya was offered divine vision* by sage Vyāsa when the war was going to be waged so that he could relate the details of the war to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. But when at the death of Duryodhana, Sañjaya was overwhelmed with grief, he lost his divine vision †.

When Arjuna requested Lord Kṛṣṇa to reveal to him, His cosmic form, He bestowed upon him the divine eye (11/8) and Arjuna had a vision of His divine form and terrible form in His cosmic body. But beholding His most terrible form Arjuna was terrified and offering his praises to Him he said that he was tormented with fear and so prayed to Him to reveal to him his four-armed form. Then He revealed to him first His four-armed form and then two-armed human form. It proves that Arjuna possessed that divine vision upto the forty-ninth verse because Arjuna in the fifity-first verse says to Lord Kṛṣṇa,"Seeing this gentle human form of Yours, O Janārdana, I am now composed and restored to my own nature."

Now a doubt rises why Arjuna did not lose the faculty of divine vision when he had already been frightened and terrified (11/23-24). The clarification is that then Arjuna was not too frightened to lose his divine vision. But here he is much frightened now and so being terrified he bows to the Lord again and again and prays to Him to reveal to him the divine form with four-arms. It is here that he loses the divine vision.

Secondly Arjuna had a keen desire to see His cosmic form (11/3). So Lord Kṛṣṇa vouchsafed divine vision to Arjuna but here he has no longing to behold His cosmic form, but being terrified he longs to see His divine form, so there is no need of the divine eye. Thus he loses the divine eye.

If Sañjaya and Arjuna had not been overwhelmed with grief and fear, they would have continued to possess the divine vision and seen more details. But it was because of their grief and terror that they lost their divine vision. Similarly when a man out of delusion is attached to the world, he loses discrimination. As a greedy man by losing discrimination commits deadly sins such as thefts, robberies and even murders, but if he without being deluded, attaches due importance to discrimination, he himself will attain salvation and will lead the world to salvation.

Link:–In the next verse Sañjaya described the Lord's four-armed divine form which was revealed to Arjuna as was promised to him by the Lord in the previous verse.

सञ्जय उवाच

इत्यर्जुनं वासुदेवस्तथोक्त्वा
स्वकं रूपं दर्शयामास भूयः ।
आश्वासयामास च भीतमेनं
भूत्वा पुनः सौम्यवपुर्महात्मा ॥ ५० ॥

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* O king! Sañjaya will relate to you all the details of the war. Everything of the battle-field will be visible to him. Sañjaya endowed with divine vision will become omniscient and will tell you the incidents of the war (Mahā. Bhīṣma.2/9-10).

† O sinless king! I am overwhelmed with grief at your son's departure to the heavenly abode and I have lost my divine vision bestowed upon me by sage Vyāsa (Mahā. Sauptika.9/62).

sañjaya uvāca

ityarjunaṁ vāsudevastathoktvā
svakaṁ rūpaṁ darśayāmāsa bhūyaḥ
āśvāsayāmāsa ca bhītamenaṁ
bhūtvā punaḥ saumyavapurmahātmā

Sañjaya said:

Having thus spoken to Arjuna, Lord Vāsudeva showed again His own four-armed form and then assuming a gentle appearance, the great souled One consoled Arjuna who was frightened. 50

Comment:

'Ityarjunaṁ vāsudevastathoktvā svakaṁ rūpaṁ darśayāmāsa bhūyaḥ'—The expression 'Ityarjunaṁ vāsudevastathoktvā' denotes that, when Arjuna prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa to reveal to him His four-armed divine form, He asked him not to be terrified of His cosmic form and behold His divine form with a complacent mind.

The term 'Tathā' means as the Lord only out of grace revealed to Arjuna His cosmic form, so did He reveal His four-armed divine form to him, he did not possess any extraordinary spiritual qualifications to behold that form.

By the term 'Bhūyaḥ' Sañjaya means to say that the Lord revealed to Arjuna the same divine form which he had beheld within the cosmic body of the Lord (11/15,17) and for which he prayed to Him (11/45,46).

'Āśvāsayāmāsa ca bhītamenaṁ bhūtvā punaḥ saumyavapur-mahātmā'—Lord Kṛṣṇa revealed to Arjuna his four-armed form and then He assumed two-armed human form in order to console Arjuna who was frightened.

Now a question rises whether the Lord was four-armed or two-armed. The answer is that He remained two-armed for carrying on His human sports but revealed His four-armed form sometimes when He thought it proper.

In the tenth chapter the Lord described his divine glories and in the eleventh chapter He has revealed His cosmic form. Thus a devotee comes to know His singular power and influence. If a person knows Him in reality or has faith in Him, he may be freed from the bondage of birth and death for ever.

How gracious the Lord was to Arjuna that first He revealed His cosmic form, then divine form and finally assumed His two-armed form! Moreover He has also showered His grace on all of us that we should think of the Lord whenever and wherever our mind is attracted towards any person, object or glory or merit etc. All of us have got the same golden opportunity of listening to His divine glories and thinking of and recollecting His cosmic form which was available to a few persons such as Arjuna and Sañjaya. So we should not miss such an opportunity.

Link:—When the Lord by assuming the human form consoled Arjuna, the latter said.

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्ट्वेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन ।
इदानीमस्मि संवृत्तः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ॥ ५१ ॥

arjuna uvāca

dṛṣṭvedaṁ mānuṣaṁ rūpaṁ tava saumyaṁ janārdana
idānīmasmi saṁvṛttaḥ sacetāḥ prakṛtiṁ gataḥ

Arjuna said:

Having seen this gentle human form of Yours, I am now composed and am restored to my own nature. 51

Comment:

'Dṛṣṭvedaṁ mānuṣaṁ rūpaṁ tava saumyaṁ janārdana idānīmasmi saṁvṛttaḥ sacetāḥ prakṛtiṁ gataḥ'—Arjuna says to Lord Kṛṣṇa that having seen His human form which He assumes as a sport, even cows, beasts, birds, trees and creepers etc., are thrilled with delight (Śrīmadbhā. 10/29/40). Having beheld that human form he is also composed and is his normal self again. His terror which was caused by beholding the Lord's cosmic form has disappeared altogether. By the term 'Sacetāḥ' Arjuna means to say that when he diverted his attention towards the Lord's grace, he came to know that he was a pigmy before the wonderful cosmic form of the Lord and it was only out of grace that He revealed to him His cosmic form, divine form and finally assumed the human form; he did not deserve it.

Link:–Lord Kṛṣṇa supporting Arjuna's view expressed in the above verse, explains the rarity of the vision of His four-armed divine form.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

सुदुर्दर्शमिदं रूपं दृष्टवानसि यन्मम ।
देवा अप्यस्य रूपस्य नित्यं दर्शनकाङ्क्षिणः ॥ ५२ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca
sudurdarśamidaṁ rūpaṁ dṛṣṭavānasi yanmama
devā apyasya rūpasya nityaṁ darśanakāṅkṣiṇaḥ

The Blessed Lord said:

It is exceedingly difficult to see this form of Mine which you have seen. Even the gods are always eager to behold this form. 52

Comment:

'Sudurdarśamidaṁ rūpaṁ dṛṣṭavānasi yanmama'—Here the form of the Lord which has been delineated is the four-armed one because even the gods can't think of the cosmic form; and as far as the human form is concerned, how can it be difficult for the gods to see it when even man can behold it? So here is the description of His four-armed divine form which has already been mentioned as 'divine form' (11/45) and 'His own form (11/50).

'Devā apyasya rūpasya nityaṁ darśanakāṅkṣiṇaḥ'—The Lord has declared here that it is exceedingly difficult to see His four-armed divine form. In the fifty-third and fifty-fourth verses He says that neither by the study of the Vedas, nor by penance, nor by charity, nor by ritual can He be seen in this form. Then He declares that He can be seen in this form by unswerving devotion. Now a doubt rises why the gods can't see Him when they are always eager to behold him. The clarification is that their eagerness does not involve exclusive devotion. Their aim is to enjoy heavenly pleasures and so they hanker after them. Their eagerness is just like worldly human beings, who want to behold the Lord while hankering after worldly pleasures and prosperity. As a traveller while travelling finds a jewel, and gets lost in it without reaching the destination, they attach secondary importance to salvation and so they can't behold the Lord as they are too much entangled in pleasures.

The gods can't behold the Lord by having eagerness because they are proud of their high status of divine abode, bodies and pleasures etc. Therefore Arjuna in the fourteenth verse of the tenth chapter said, "O Lord, neither the gods nor demons know

Your manifestation." Thus Arjuna has taken both of them belonging to the same category. It means that as the gods possess prosperity, the demons possess conjuring power. But prosperity or power is not conducive to the Lord's vision. He can be seen by exclusive devotion (11/54) both by the gods and demons.

By the expression 'Devā api' the Lord means to say that virtuous actions can lead to higher regions rather than to God-Realization.

Link:–The Lord clarifies the same point which has already been described in the preceding verse.

नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया।
शक्य एवंविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा॥ ५३॥

nāhaṁ vedairna tapasā na dānena na cejyayā
śakya evaṁvidho draṣṭuṁ dṛṣṭavānasi māṁ yathā

Neither by the study of the Vedas, nor by penance, nor by charity, nor by ritual can I be seen in this form as you have seen Me. 53

Comment:

'Dṛṣṭvānasi māṁ yathā'—The Lord says to Arjuna that he has seen His four-armed divine form only by His grace. He seeks to convey that a devotee can have His vision only by His grace, not by any other qualification.

'Nāhaṁ vedairna tapasā na dānena na cejyayā śakya evaṁvidho draṣṭum'—A man can buy an article for a hundred rupees, only if its cost is less than a hundred rupees. Similarly if the Lord can be bought by means of the Vedas, or penance or charity or ritual, it means that He is cheaper than these meritorious deeds. But actually it is not so, all these meritorious acts cannot equal the Lord in cost. He is far superior to all the merits and deeds. How can He be bought by a human being, a negligible fragment of the universe, created by Him? He can be attained only by His grace. The Lord showers His grace on a person when he, renouncing his pride of his possessions and resources, surrenders himself to Him. In that case the Lord reveals Himself immediately. Till a man attaches value to material things, ability, power and understanding etc., and relies upon them, the Lord remains afar in spite of being the nearest.

Here the vision of the Lord's four-armed form, rather than the cosmic form, has been declared as rare because the cosmic form has already been glorified in almost identical words in the forty-eighth verse. If we take it as the praise of the cosmic form, it means that we expose the Lord to the charge of tautology. Secondly in the next verse the Lord Himself explains that He can be seen in this form by exclusive devotion. The cosmic form can't be beheld by exclusive devotion because how can a devotee have exclusive devotion for His cosmic form when even the valiant devotee Arjuna was terrified of that form even while having the divine vision?

Link:–When the Lord cannot be seen by any meritorious deed, how can He be seen then? Lord Kṛṣṇa suggests the means in the next two verses.

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन।
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप॥ ५४॥

bhaktyā tvananyayā śakya ahamevaṁvidho'rjuna
jñātuṁ draṣṭuṁ ca tattvena praveṣṭuṁ ca paraṁtapa

By unswerving devotion I can be seen in this form (with four-arms) and known in essence and even entered into, O scorcher of foes. 54

Comment:

'Bhaktyā tvananyayā śakya ahmevamvidho'rjuna'—Here the term 'Tu' (Indeed) has been used to emphasize the point that the four-armed form holding a conch, a disc, a mace and a lotus each in one of the hands cannot be seen by any meritorious deeds but only by exclusive devotion.

Exclusive devotion means dependence on God only without having the least dependence on one's own ability or power or intellect or resources etc. The exclusive devotion is not determined either by the mind or intellect or senses etc., but by one's own self. Restlessness for the vision of the Lord is specially contributory to the attainment of divine vision. One can't feel at ease without His vision even for a moment. One should become restless for beholding the Lord. That restlessness for the Lord burns the sins of infinite births. For such devotees who have an exclusive devotion for the Lord, He declares,"He who always and constantly thinks of Me with exclusive devotion, to that Yogī always absorbed in Me, I am easily attainable" (Gītā 8/14); and "To those who worship Me alone, thinking of no one else who are ever devout, I provide gain and security" (Gītā 9/22).

Exclusive devotion also means no dependence on adoration or meditation or spiritual discipline for God-Realization. Then why to worship the Lord and meditate on Him? These are the means to do away one's pride. When this pride is destroyed, the Lord's grace manifests itself and it is by His grace that a devotee attains Him.

'Jñātum draṣṭum ca tattvena praveṣṭum'—The Lord can be known, seen and attained by exclusive devotion.

The Lord can also be known in reality and attained through knowledge (wisdom) (Gītā 18/55) but He can't be forced to reveal Himself to such a devotee.

'Jñātum' (to be known) means that a devotee knows the Lord in reality that all is God (Gītā 7/19) and He is being and non-being both (Gītā 9/19). It does not mean that the Lord is encompassed by the devotee's intellect but He interpenetrates his intellect fully.

'Draṣṭum' means that a devotee can behold the Lord in any form such as Lord Viṣnu or Lord Rāma or Lord Kṛṣṇa.

'Praveṣṭum' means that a devotee realizes his identity with the Lord or he enters the sports of the Lord. To enjoy His sports, the desire of the devotee and the will of the Lord are the chief factors.

In that case though all his desires are wiped out, yet the Lord fulfils not only his spiritual desire but also mundane desire if any. Before beholding the Lord, Dhruva and Vibhīṣaṇa both had a desire to rule over the kingdoms. Their worldly desires were satisfied by the Lord. It means that the Lord first satisfies the desire of the devotee and then by His own sweet will enables him to attain perfection. In that case nothing remains to be known, to be done and to be acquired by him.

An Important Fact

The keen desire of a devotee for God-Realization rouses the desire in the Lord to meet His devotee. No one can create, any hurdle in the Lord's desire to meet His devotee. Then He removes all the obstacles of the devotee by His grace and reveals Himself to him without any consideration for his eligibility.

मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।
निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥ ५५ ॥

matkarmakṛnmatparamo madbhaktaḥ saṅgavarjitaḥ
nirvairaḥ sarvabhūteṣu yaḥ sa māmeti pāṇḍava

O Pāṇḍava (Arjuna), he who works for My sake, depends on Me, is devoted to Me, has no attachment and is free from malice towards all beings, reaches Me. 55

Comment:

[The five points mentioned in this verse can be divided into two parts (i) Attachment to the Lord (ii) Detachment from the world. The first part includes the first three points—'works for Me', 'depends on Me' and 'is devoted to Me' while the second part includes the last two points— 'no attachment' and 'freedom from malice'.]

'Matkarmakṛt'—It means that all the spiritual pursuits such as utterance of the Lord's name, loud chanting, meditation, good company and study of the sacred books, as well as the mundane duties according to one's caste, creed and stage (order) of life should be performed for the Lord's sake.

Actually the division of actions into spiritual ones and mundane ones is external. All the actions whether spiritual or mundane should be performed for the Lord's sake only because the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., with which he performs actions have been given to him by God and they are His; so he should perform actions with the power given by Him according to His ordinance in order to please Him by becoming merely an instrument in His hands.

'Matparamaḥ'—'Matparamaḥ' is he who regarding the Lord as the Supreme, depends only on Him.

'Madbhaktaḥ'—He is devoted to the Lord i.e., he has admitted his relationship with the Lord that only He is his and he is only His. This relationship develops devotion for Him.

Such a devotee beholds the Lord pervading everywhere all the time, all persons, things and his own self. From this angle that God is everywhere, He is also here. Being at all times, He is now. Pervading all beings and things, He is also in him. As He belongs to all, He is also his. He who has such a belief is the Lord's devotee.

'Saṅgavarjitaḥ nirvairaḥ sarvabhūteṣu yaḥ' —The devotee, who works for the Lord's sake, depends on Him and is devoted to Him, becomes free from attachment and desires.

Secondly when a devotee realizes that he is a fragment of the Lord, his devotion for Him is aroused and then he becomes free from attachment. Having detachment and the conviction that God pervades all the beings, he becomes free from malice towards all of them even on receiving the worst treatment. He beholds the Lord's will and grace in every action. Thus his affinity with the world is renounced and he attains God.

'Sa māmeti' —This expression includes the three points — to know Him in reality, to behold Him and to attain Him; as explained in the preceding verse. It means that he attains the object of human life by reaching Him.

An Important Fact

The Lord at the end of the ninth chapter said to Arjuna,"Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, adore Me, bow down to Me, thus making yourself steadfast in Me, and entirely depending on Me, you will come to Me" (9/34).

After disclosing this secret, Lord Kṛṣṇa wanted to reveal more secrets to his devotee Arjuna and so He revealed them in the tenth and the eleventh chapters.

The man depends on the perishable and kaleidoscopic Matter (Prakṛti) and its evolutes, the body and the world and so he has disinclination for the imperishable and eternal Lord. The tenth and the eleventh chapter aim at removing this disinclination and conducing him towards the Lord.

A man possesses two kinds of power — of thinking and of beholding. Both of them are to be utilized for devotion to God. So Lord Kṛṣṇa preached the gospel in the tenth chapter that whatever speciality or merit or glory a person perceives in a thing or a being and when its thought comes to his mind, he should think of the Lord only.

In the eleventh chapter He by revealing His cosmic form to Arjuna, means to preach that a devotee should behold Him pervading

everywhere in different forms and names etc., because this entire universe is a part of His cosmic form.

Arjuna prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa two times. In the seventeenth verse of the tenth chapter he asked "In what various aspects are you to be thought of by me?" So the Lord mentioned His divine glories that he could think of Him in those glories.

At the beginning of the eleventh chapter Arjuna said, "I want to see Your divine form". So the Lord revealed to Arjuna His cosmic form by offering him divine vision.

It means that a striver should think only of the Lord and should behold everyone and everything as the manifestation of the Lord only.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुन-संवादे विश्वरूपदर्शनयोगो नामैकादशोऽध्यायः ॥११॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde viśvarūpadarśanayogo nāmaikādaśo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ , Tat, Sat, the names of the Lord, in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavadgītā, the knowledge of Brahma, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, this is the eleventh discourse designated:

'The Yoga of the vision of the Cosmic form'.

Words, letters and Uvāca (said) in the Eleventh Chapter

(1) In this chapter in **'Athaikādaśo'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are three words, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are twenty-two words, in verses there are eight hundred and fifty-one words and there are thirteen concluding words. Thus the total of the words is eight hundred and eighty-nine.

(2) In this chapter in **'Athaikādaśo' dhyāyaḥ'** there are seven letters, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are seventy letters, in verses there are two thousand, one hundred and ninety-three letters and there are fifty concluding words. Thus the total of the letters is two thousand three hundred and twenty. In this chapter out of fifty-five verses in the first verse there are thirty-three letters, in each of the verses from the fifteenth to the fiftieth there are forty-four letters and there are thirty-two letters in each of the remaining eighteen verses.

(3) In this chapter the term **'Uvāca'** has been used eleven times — four times **'Arjuna Uvāca'**, four times **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** and three times **'Sañjaya Uvāca'.**

Metres Used in the Eleventh Chapter

Out of the fifty-five verses in this chapter there is **'anuṣṭup'** metre in nineteen verses; **'upendravajrā'** metre in three verses and **'upajāti'** metre in thirty-three verses.

Out of the nineteen verses having **'anuṣṭup'** metre; in the first quarter of the first and fifty-fifth verses 'bha-gaṇa' being used there is **'bha-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the eleventh and fifty-third verses 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'na-vipulā'** metre; and in the first quarter of the tenth verse 'na-gaṇa' and in the third quarter 'bha-gaṇa' being used there is **'saṁkīrṇa-'vipulā'** metre. The remaining fourteen verses (2/9,12-14, 51-52, 54) are possessed of the characteristics of right **'pathyāvaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

Out of the remaining thirty-six verses, the twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth and forty-fifth verses are possessed of **'upendravajrā'** metre while the remaining thirty-three verses (15-27, 30-44, 46-50) are possessed of the characteristics of right **'upajāti'** metre.

Śrī Hariḥ

TWELFTH CHAPTER

Introduction

Lord Kṛṣṇa in the thirty-third and the thirty-fourth verses of the fourth chapter explained the superiority of the path of knowledge (wisdom) and exhorted Arjuna to gain knowledge. Then He explained the glory of knowledge. After that He explained the importance of the worship of the Supreme Who is attributeless and formless in the sixteenth and the seventeenth verses and from the twenty-fourth to the twenty-sixth verses of the fifth chapter, from the twenty-fourth to the twenty-eighth verses of the sixth chapter and from the eleventh to the thirteenth verses of the eighth chapter.

*In the forty-seventh verse of the sixth chapter He explained the glory of the devotee. From the seventh chapter to the eleventh chapter He time and again through the terms 'Aham' (I) and 'Mām' (me) specially laid emphasis on the importance of the worship of God Who is endowed with attributes and form and also is endowed with attributes but is formless. At last in the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth verses of the eleventh chapter He glorified exclusive devotion and its fruit. **

Having heard the above description Arjuna had a curiosity to know which devotees– those who worship God with attributes or those who worship the unmanifested attributeless Brahma are better. So he puts the question—

अर्जुन उवाच

एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।
ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥१॥

arjuna uvāca
evaṁ satatayuktā ye bhaktāstvāṁ paryupāsate
ye cāpyakṣaramavyaktaṁ teṣāṁ ke yogavittamāḥ

Arjuna said:

Those devotees who, ever steadfast, thus worship Thee (God with attributes) and those again who worship the Imperishable and the Unmanifested, which of them are better versed in Yoga? 1

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* Before this chapter in the following verses there is the description of the devotees who worship the Lord with form.
6/47—He full of faith worships Me with his inner self abiding in Me.
7/1—The mind intent on Me, practising Yoga and taking refuge in Me.
7/29/-30 – They strive taking refuge in Me of steadfast in mind.
8/7 – With mind and intellect fixed in Me.
8/14 – He constantly remembers Me with single minded devotion.
9/14 – They firm in vows worship Me with steadfast devotion.
9/22 – They worship Me alone thinking of no one else.
9/30 – Worship Me with exclusive devotion.
10/9 – With their mind and their life wholly absorbed in Me, enlightening each other.
11/55 – He performs all actions for Me, he is dovoted to Me and he depends on Me.
In the following verses before this chapter there is the description of the devotees who worship formless God.
4/34 – Know that (knowledge of the self) by prostration, by question by service.
4/39 – The man who is full of faith obtains that knowledge.
5/8 – Sāṅkhyayogī who knows the truth (reality) thinks, "I do nothing at all."
5/13 – Neither acting nor causing others to act.
5/24-26 – Attains Brahma Nirvāna (beatitude of God).
6/25 – Having established the mind in the self or in God.
8/11 – The Supreme Being Who is declared Imperishable by those who know the Vedas.
8/13 – Uttering the mono-syllabled Om, the Brahma and remembering Me.
9/15 – Others worship Me in My absolute formless aspect.

Comment:

'Evaṁ satatayuktā ye bhaktāḥ'— The expression 'Ye bhaktāḥ' (those devotees) stands for the same striver for whom 'Yaḥ' (who) and 'Saḥ' (he) terms have been used by the Lord in the fifty-fifth verse of the eleventh chapter. Such strivers worship God Who is endowed with attributes and form.

Here the term 'Evam' directs towards the fifty-fifth verse of the eleventh chapter.

'Satatayuktā' (ever steadfast) is he who believes 'I am only God's'.

The strivers (devotees) who have full faith in God, have the only aim of God-Realization. Therefore while undertaking either spiritual activities such as adoration and meditation etc., or mundane activities such as business or service for earning their livelihood, such devotees ever remain steadfast in Him by thinking of Him i.e., they have their affinity only for Him.

A striver commits an error that while performing the spiritual activities he holds that he has affinity for God but while performing mundane actions he thinks that he has affinity for the world. The reason is that he has not fixed God-Realization as the only aim of his life. If he realizes that the only aim of human life is God-Realization and sticks to it, his all activities will conduce him to God-Realization.

If an aspirant thinks of the Lord at the beginning of the activity and at its end, it means that he has thought of the Lord even during the performance of the activity in the same way as a businessman while making entries in the account book gets so much absorbed in it that he even forgets who he is and why he is making those entries and calculations. Though it seems forgetfulness, yet it is not forgetfulness because he has his aim in his mind. A striver always believes that he is only God's and whatever action he performs is only for Him.

'Tvām paryupāsate'—Here the term 'Tvām' — should be interpreted in a wider sense covering all the forms with attributes assumed by Him during His various incarnations as well as the form with which He resides in His Divine Abode and also He Who is called by different forms and names according to the beliefs of devotees.

The term 'Paryupāsate' means 'to worship well.' As a chaste wife through her body serves her husband, thinking of him in his absence and serves his parents and performs all the household duties only to please and serve him, so does a striver being engrossed in Him, through chanting His names, through thinking and meditation, through rendering service to beings and through the performance of mundane duties, worships Him alone without attaching the least importance to the perishable objects and actions.

'Ye cāpyakṣaramavyaktam'—The term 'Ye' stands for the strivers who worship attributeless and formless God.

The term 'Akṣaram' stands for the Imperishable Brahma Who is All Truth, All Consciousness and All Bliss consolidated (It will be explained in the third verse of this chapter).

The term 'Avyaktam' stands for the Unmanifested Who is incomprehensible to the senses. Here the use of two adjective 'Akṣaram' (imperishable) and 'Avyaktam' (Unmanifest) has been given for attributeless and formless Brahma (It will also be explained in the third verse of this chapter).

It seems that the Lord by using the term 'Api' (also) wants to compare the devotees who worship the Lord endowed with form with those devotees who worship the formless Absolute (Brahma) by regarding Him superior.

'Teṣām ke yogavittamāḥ'—Here the term 'Teṣām' stands for both the devotees– those who worship God with attributes and also those who worship attributeless God. In the fifth verse of this chapter this term has been used for the devotees who worship attributeless God while in the seventh verse it has been used for the devotees who worship God with attributes. So Arjuna wants to ask which of the two is better.

If we give a serious thought to the answer given by the Lord to Arjuna's question,

we come to know the importance of Arjuna's question.

From the second verse of this chapter to the twentieth verse of the fourteenth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa went on speaking continuously. This is the singular occasion when Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke continuously for such a long time by uttering seventy-three verses. It shows that here Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to clarify some vital points. He wants to explain–the identity of the Lord Who is endowed with form with Brahma Who is formless; the means of attaining the two and the marks of the perfect devotees (Gītā 12/13-19) and the wise (Gītā 14/22-25) and how they may realize the importance of the renouncement of attachment to the world.

It means that the supreme word, the most secret of all, for the supreme good of all beings which the Lord wanted to declare for the welfare of them was disclosed in response to Arjuna's question.

Link:–The Lord answers Arjuna's question in the next verse pertaining to the superiority of the worshippers who worship God with attributes and those who worship attributeless God.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते।
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः॥ २॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

mayyāveśya mano ye mām nityayuktā upāsate
śraddhayā parayopetāste me yuktatamā matāḥ

The Blessed Lord said:

Those who, fixing their mind on Me, worship Me ever steadfast and endowed with supreme faith, are the most perfect in Yoga in my opinion. 2

Comment:

[Lord Kṛṣṇa explained this fact in the forty-seventh verse of the sixth chapter Himself. But Arjuna could not understand the fact (verdict) because he did not put the question. So he put this question in the first verse of the chapter. Similarly the strivers don't understand the spiritual teaching imparted in the religious discourses by the saints and the scriptures without having a keen desire and curiosity. But if they have a keen desire to know it, they pay special attention and listen to it with faith and study the scriptures carefully. Therefore the strivers should listen to the religious discourses and study the scriptures carefully considering them for them and translate those teachings into practice.]

'Mayyāveśya mano ye mām nitya-yuktā upāsate'—A person's mind is concentrated and he thinks automatically of the persons or object he loves.

The expression 'Nityayuktāḥ' (ever steadfast or earnest) means that the striver should remain absorbed in God by thinking "only God is mine and I am only of God." When a striver has a firm resolve (aim) to realize God, his mind and intellect automatically get absorbed in Him. On the other hand if his aim is not God-Realization, his mind and intellect can't be absorbed in Him in spite of his best efforts. Mind and intellect are the instruments which remain under the control of the agent. So when the striver himself gets absorbed in Him the mind and the intellect automatically get absorbed in Him.

A striver commits an error that he instead of getting absorbed himself, practises to absorb his mind and intellect in Him. So there is a general complaint that strivers' mind and intellect don't get absorbed in Him. Through the concentration of mind and intellect he can attain the state of trance but he can't realize God. God-Realization is possible only if he himself gets absorbed in Him.

Real worship consists in surrendering oneself to God and holding "I am only God's and only God is mine." When a man

surrenders himself to God, all the prescribed actions including chanting His name, thinking, meditation, service and adoration etc., are performed only for Him.

The body is a fragment of Prakṛti (nature) while the soul (self) is a fragment of God. But the self having forgotten the real affinity for God assumes Its affinity for nature and its evolute-body, senses, mind and intellect etc. But as soon as he (the self) renounces this assumed affinity, his real and eternal affinity for God is manifested, his memory is gained–"Destroyed is my delusion as I have gained my knowledge (memory)" (Gītā 18/73).

It is because of a man's (soul's) inclination to Matter(nature) i.e., by deriving pleasure out of it that he assumes his affinity for it i.e., he assumes, "I am body." Because of this assumed affinity for the body he holds that he belongs to a particular caste, creed, colour, profession, order of life and regards the self rather than the body as in the stage of boyhood, youth and old age etc., viz., he does not regard the self as different from the body.

This assumed affinity for the alien body and the world becomes so firm that he remembers it without making any effort. If he realizes his real affinity for the sentient and eternal Lord, he can never forget Him and while performing all the actions such as sitting, eating, drinking, sleeping and waking etc., he automatically will think of Him.

The striver whose only aim instead of hankering after worldly pleasures and prosperity is God-Realization, it means that he has started realizing his real affinity for God. When he fully realizes this real affinity, he has not the least desire to hanker after the worldly pleasures and prosperity through the mind, intellect senses and body etc.

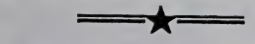
The self (soul) in spite of being a fragment of God assumes Its affinity for nature because It wants to derive pleasure out of it. So a striver having a disinclination for the world should realize his real affinity for God and should have an inclination to Him only.

'Śraddhayā parayopetāste me yuktatamā matāḥ'—A striver has faith in the thing or person etc., whom he considers the best and then he follows the principle decided by him without deviating from it.

A person's mind is fixed on the object or person he loves and his intellect is fixed on the object or person in whom he has faith. If he is a lover, he seeks company of the beloved but if he has faith, he ever remains ready to carry out the order of the adored one.

He who loves only God ever realizes his affinity for Him and never feels separation from Him. Therefore such type of devotees are the most perfect in Yoga in the Lord's opinion.

The fact which has been pointed out here by using plural number in the expression 'Te me yuktatamā matāḥ' (they are the best in Yoga in My opinion) has already been explained in the singular number by the Lord in the forty-seventh verse of the sixth chapter by the expression 'Sa me yuktatamo mataḥ' (he is considered by Me to be the best Yogī). *



Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord declared the worshippers of God with form and attributes to be the best Yogīs. So the question arises whether the worshippers of the attributeless Absolute (Brahma) are not the best Yogīs. The Lord answers the question in the next two verses:—

* In the fifty-fourth verse of the eleventh chapter the Lord has declared, "By single minded devotion I can be known and seen in reality and also entered into." But in the fifty-fifth verse of the eighteenth chapter the Lord declares for the devotees who worship the attributeless Absolute (Brahma), "He, having known Me in truth, forthwith enters into Me." Here He does not declare that he can see Him. Thus only the devotees who worship the Lord with attributes can see Him.

The Lord in the forty-seventh verse of the sixth chapter has declared the striver full of faith in His form with attributes the best Yogī. Thus such a striver (devotee) is very loving to Him.

ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।
सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ॥ ३ ॥
संनियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।
ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ ४ ॥

ye tvakṣaramanirdeśyamavyaktaṁ paryupāsate
sarvatragamacintyaṁ ca kūṭasthamacalaṁ dhruvam
saṁniyamyendriyagrāmaṁ sarvatra samabuddhayaḥ .
te prāpnuvanti māmeva sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ

But those who worship the Imperishable, the Undefinable, the Unmanifest, the Omnipresent, the Unthinkable, the Unchanging and the Immobile, the constant, by restraining all the senses, being even-minded everywhere, engrossed in the welfare of all beings, also come to Me. 3-4

Comment:

The term 'Tu' (but) shows that the worshippers of the formless Brahma are different from those who worship the Lord with form.

'Saṁniyamyendriyagrāmam' — Having given the term 'Saṁniyamya' with two prefixes 'Sam' and 'Ni' the Lord lays emphasis on full control over all the senses. If they are not fully controlled there is difficulty in the worship of the attributeless Absolute. The senses of the devotees who worship the Lord with attributes are fixed on Him and so there is not so much need of controlling the senses as it is for the devotees who worship attributeless Brahma. Such devotees having no base for thought, without controlling the senses can think of the objects of senses and thus can perish (Gītā 2/62-63). Therefore for the devotees who worship the attributeless God it is necessary to control not only the senses fully but also the mind because so long as there is attachment of the mind to the objects of senses, the Absolute (Brahma) cannot be attained (Gītā 15/11).

In the Gītā control over senses has been considered very essential in the Disciplines of Knowledge and Action. There is no such stress in the Discipline of Devotion.

'Acintyam'—The term stands for the Absolute Who is beyond the reach of senses and mind because they being the evolutes of Prakṛti can't even know and think of Prakṛti; then how can they know and think of God Who transcends Prakṛti (Nature)? God can be known only by the self.

'Sarvatragam'—God is all-pervading and limitless. So He can't be attained by limited mind, intellect and senses.

'Anirdeśyam'—'Anirdeśyam' is that which cannot be defined through language or speech. Only that which is accompanied by caste, quality, action and is confined through space, time, thing and individual can be defined or hinted at. How can the all pervading and sentient God be defined or hinted at by the insentient language?

'Kūṭastham'—This term stands for the Absolute Who while pervading all space, time things and individuals remains unvitiated and uncontaminated. He ever remains uniform and unaltered without undergoing any change at all. On a 'Kūṭa' (anvil) different instruments and ornaments etc., are shaped but it ever remains the same. Similarly in spite of birth, existence and destruction of different beings and objects, God pervading them remains the same. He is not affected by their birth, existence and destruction.

'Acalam'—Brahma is totally immovable and free from change while Prakṛti (nature) is movable.

'Dhruvam'—The Absolute Who is certain and eternal is called 'Dhruva'. Out of all the eight adjectives used for Him, this one is the most important one otherwise people may

misunderstand whether He exists or not because all the other adjectives are in the negative. He ever exists and never ceases to be in the least,"The world seems to exist because of His existence or light" (Mānasa 1/117/4).

'Akṣaram'—The Absolute Who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified is never destroyed. He is imperishable. He does not suffer any diminution.

'Avyaktam'—He is unmanifested and He is incomprehensible to the mind and senses and He is also devoid of any form or shape.

'Paryupāsate'—The term here stands for the real worship of the devotees who worship the attributeless Brahma. Real worship consists in remaining established in God by identifying the self with Him without any desire and egoistic notion.

He Who is denoted by these eight adjectives is an imperfect form of Brahma because Brahma is incomprehensible even to the intellect. But the worship which is offered with these eight adjectives is the worship of attributeless Brahma and this worship results in the attainment of attributeless Brahma. He can't be an object of intellect. To keep in view these eight adjectives of the Absolute, what adoration is made, is called 'Paryupāsate.' This is real worship of the Absolute and it results in merging in the Absolute.

An Important Fact

In order to explain the existence of God two kinds of adjectives—in the negative and in the positive have been given. The negative adjectives-imperishable, indefinable, unmanifest, unthinkable, immovable, unlimited show that God is different from Prakṛti (Nature) while the positive adjectives such as omnipresent, uniform, eternal, and nouns – truth, consciousness and bliss show the Lord's independent existence.

Innate, in active Absolute, beyond the states of activity and non-activity, is the illuminator of activity and non-activity. The different adjectives have been used so that the intellect may have a conception about Him and it may have reflection upon that Absolute.

In the Gītā the description of God and the soul (self) is almost the same. The adjectives which have been used here for God have been used for the soul also— as in the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth verses of the second chapter 'omnipresent', 'immovable', 'unmanifest' and 'unthinkable' etc., and in the sixteenth verse of the fifteenth chapter 'unchangeable' and 'imperishable' have been used for the soul. Similarly in the twenty-fifth verse of the seventh chapter the adjective imperishable has been used for God while in the fifth verse of the fourteenth chapter it has been used for the soul.

Both God and the soul pervade everywhere. 'The whole world is pervaded by God (The Supreme Person)' (8/22, 18/46) and 'all this world is pervaded by Me' (9/4). Similarly in the seventeenth verse of the second chapter it is said about the soul also "All this is pervaded by the soul."

As the sights of eyes don't strike together and as sounds in spite of being wide-spread don't strike together, so does (according to the dualistic principle) the all pervasiveness of God not strike with the all pervasiveness of the soul both being without form or shape.

'Sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ'—In the Discipline of Action renouncement of attachment, the sense of mine, desire and selfishness is very important. When a person uses the objects such as the body, riches and property in rendering service to others without regarding them as his and for him, his attachment, the sense of mine, desire and selfishness are naturally renounced. When the body is used in rendering service to others, egoism is renounced and when objects are used for others, the sense of mine is renounced. A striver following the Discipline of Action considers the objects of those people to whom he renders service. So it is indispensable for a 'Karmayogī' to remain engrossed in the welfare of all beings. But in this verse as well as in the twenty-fifth verse of the fifth chapter the Lord declares that the 'Jñānayogīs' (the followers of the Discipline of Knowledge) remain engrossed in the

welfare of all beings. It proves that the path of action is necessary even in the path of knowledge in order to renounce affinity for actions totally.

Here a point needs attention. The service rendered with the body, objects and actions is limited because all the objects and actions are limited. But he who has the feeling for the welfare of all beings renders unlimited service because there is no limit of the feeling. Therefore a striver should use the objects for the welfare of all beings by regarding them as theirs without attachment. Because of the unlimited feeling when a striver renounces his affinity for Matter totally, he realizes the unlimited Essence i.e., God. When a person regards objects as his own, he has the egoistic notion as well as unevenness of mind. But when he uses them for others by regarding them as theirs, his egoistic notion and unevenness of mind come to an end. On the other hand a common person may use every object of his own in rendering service to his kith and kin but because of his attachment and sense of mine to them (limited feeling) he can't realize the limitless God. So in order to attain the limitless God, a striver should possess the limitless feeling of the welfare of all beings.

A striver following the Discipline of Knowledge because of the lack of dispassion can't renounce the worldly objects by considering them illusory so long as he attaches importance to the perishable objects. But a striver following the Discipline of Action can renounce them easily by using them in rendering service to others. The former can renounce objects only if he has a keen dispassion while the latter can renounce them with a little dispassion because he uses them for the welfare of others. Thus affinity for Matter is renounced easily by being engrossed in the welfare of all beings. Thus the path of action is an easier one.

The devotees who worship the attributeless Absolute specially hold two views (i) Whatever appears in the form of the insentient or the sentient and moving or the unmoving is soul or Brahma (the Absolute). (ii) Whatever appears is perishable, transitory and unreal. Thus realizing the seen as unreal, whatever remains is soul or Brahma.

A striver following the path of knowledge can't attain perfection merely by learning 'All is Brahma' so long as he has attachment in his mind i.e., he possesses evil propensities such as desire (lust) and anger etc. So like a Karmayogī it is necessary for him to remain engrossed in the welfare of all beings in order to attain perfection by renouncing attachment.

Those strivers who having held the world as unreal meditate on God in solitude, their physical renouncement of actions proves useful in their spiritual path. But by mere renunciation they do not attain to perfection (Gītā 3/4). For attaining perfection dispassion for pleasures and detachment from the body, senses, mind and intellect are very essential, and for dispassion and detachment they should remain engrossed in the welfare of all beings. When they lead a lonely life away form the world, they have an egoistic notion which can be removed by being engrossed in the welfare of all beings.

A striver should not only be detached from the world but also from the body because the body is also a part of the world. So long as he identifies himself with the body and remains attached to it, even by living in loneliness, he can't attain his aim. In order to wipe out egoism and attachment he must be engrossed in the welfare of all beings.

Secondly it is not possible for a striver ever to remain in solitude because he has to come to the society for the maintenance of his body. Moreover if he is not completely dispassionate because of his pride, in dealings he may be harsh and so his egoistic notion does not come to an end. Therefore he cannot achieve his aim. In order to get rid of this harshness he should remain engrossed in the welfare of all beings. A striver following the Discipline of Knowledge may not render service on a large scale but the Lord declares that he will attain Him because he is intent on the welfare of all beings.

It is necessary for both the strivers whether they worship God with attributes or God without attributes to remain engrossed in the

welfare of all beings. When a striver thinks that his own welfare is different from the welfare of all beings, it means that he has the egoistic notion which is a stumbling block to God-Realization. When a striver performs all actions (eating, drinking sleeping etc., as well as chanting His name, meditation, study of the scriptures etc.) for the welfare of the world, his egoistic notion comes to an end and God's power which is ever engaged in the welfare of all beings supports him.

Real service does not consist in offering objects and in bodily service but in thinking of the welfare of all beings without any selfish motive or reward. He should serve them as he serves the limbs of his body without expecting any fruit.

As a common man without receiving any moral teaching serves his body very scrupulously without being proud of the act, so does a God-Realized soul remain engrossed in the welfare of all beings through the likeness of the self (Gītā 6/32) without having the least pride or egoistic notion. A striver should ever follow the foot steps of such a God-Realized soul scrupulously.

'Sarvatra samabuddhayaḥ'—The devotees who worship attributeless and formless Brahma have evenness of mind in all persons and objects because they behold Him pervading everywhere as He is equanimous (Gītā 5/19).

The Lord wants to explain that the devotees following the path of knowledge besides thinking of God in solitariness should also be even-minded in practical life. Secondly in loneliness they can't remain totally lonely because the body is also a part of the world. When a striver beholds the world and the body as one, it means that he is even-minded. But if he views the body and the world as separate, it is uneven mindedness. Real loneliness consists in beholding only God everywhere and in remaining established in Him, having renounced egoism, attachment to the body senses, mind and intellect etc., totally. Such a striver is really even-minded.

In the Gītā 'evenness of mind' means beholding the same Lord pervading everywhere rather than the same dealings with everyone. The Lord in the eighteenth verse of the fifth chapter mentions five beings—a learned and humble Brāhmaṇa, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a pariah. No one can have the same dealings with all of them. The same dealings are not possible. One should not resort to such dealings. A striver beholds God in all of them. As in different ornaments made of gold there is nothing but gold, so does a striver have equal vision as he beholds God everywhere.

The liberated soul has equal vision as he beholds God everywhere. Such liberated souls are model for strivers. A striver has no equanimity because he accepts the existence of the worldly objects. When he ceases to accept their existence, he attains equanimity.

A striver tries to behold God everywhere while for God-Realized souls there is nothing but God. They are even-minded because they behold only God everywhere. This natural state of a realized soul is an ideal for strivers. They aim at it. In what proportion the independent existence of non-self the strivers accept, in that proportion they are not even-minded. The lesser is this independent existence in their mind, the more even-minded they become. The strivers try to see the Absolute everywhere. But the intellect of the God-Realized soul is naturally solidified by the Absolute.

'Te prāpnuvanti māmeva'—The Lord declares that the devotees who worship the attributeless God also attain Him. It means that He is in no way different from the attributeless Brahma (Gītā 9/4; 14/27). He is both endowed with attributes and also attributeless.

In these two verses the Lord has mentioned four factors pertaining to the worshippers of attributeless Brahma. (1) The form of the attributeless Absolute. (2) Condition of the striver. (3) The form of worship. (4) What the striver attains.

(1) In response to Arjuna's question which he put in the second half of the first verse using two adjectives imperishable and unmanifested pertaining to the attributeless Absolute, the Lord in order to give a more

detailed description uses five adjectives in the negative (imperishable, indefinable, unmanifest, unthinkable and immovable) and three in the positive (omnipresent, fixed and eternal).

(2) Such strivers behold the attributeless Absolute everywhere, all the time, in all objects and persons etc. It is on account of body consciousness and acceptance of the separate existence of worldly objects there is desire to enjoy sense-objects and thus sense-objects are enjoyed. Strivers of the Absolute don't regard any independent existence of anything except God. So they don't attach any importance to worldly pleasures and don't want to enjoy them because for them the pleasures have no separate existence. Such strivers being even-minded remain engrossed in the welfare of all creatures.

(3) His worship is that he has a constant eye on the attributeless Absolute.

(4) The Lord declares that those who worship attributeless God also attain Him. It means that God with attributes and God Who is attributeless are one and the same.

Link:–In response to Arjuna's question the Lord in the second verse declared the devotees who worship the Lord with attributes the most perfect in Yoga while in the third and the fourth verses He declared, "The devotees who worship attributeless God attain me." The Lord in the next three verses describes the difficulty and ease of the two kinds of worship.

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।
अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥ ५ ॥

kleśo'dhikatarasteṣāmavyaktāsaktacetasām
avyaktā hi gatirduḥkham dehavadbhiravāpyate

The difficulty of those whose minds are attached to the Unmanifested is greater, for the goal of the Unmanifested is hard to reach by the body conscious beings. 5

Comment:

'Kleśo'dhikatarasteṣāmavyaktā – saktacetasām'—The strivers whose thoughts are set on the Unmanifested are those who regard the worship of the attributeless Absolute as superior but whose minds have not entered the attributeless Absolute. In order to enter the Absolute a striver should possess three qualities—interest (inclination), faith and qualification. Such strivers having heard the glory of the Absolute develop a bit of inclination and having faith, start the spiritual discipline; but because of the identification of the self with the body and because of the lack of dispassion their minds don't comprehend the Absolute.

The Lord in the twenty-seventh and the twenty-eighth verses of the sixth chapter explains that the Yogī who has become one with God experiences easily the infinite bliss of contact with the Eternal (Brahma). But here by the terms 'greater difficulty' He explains that the minds of these strivers, unlike the strivers who have become one with God, have not got absorbed in the Eternal. Their minds are only attached to the Absolute. It means that they remain attached to the bodies but having heard the glory of the Unmanifest and regarding this worship as superior to others they get attached to it. But attachment to the Unmanifest is extremely difficult.

In the fifth verse of the thirteenth chapter as well as in several other verses the term 'Avyaktam' (unmanifest) has been used for Prakṛti (nature) while here in this verse it stands for Brahma (the Eternal or the Absolute) Who is attributeless and formless. The reason is that Arjuna in the first verse of this chapter put the question pertaining to the worship of God with attributes and form and also of Brahma the Imperishable and the Unmanifested. So here it stands for the

Eternal or the Absolute rather than nature.

In the fourth verse of the ninth chapter the expression 'Avyaktamūrtinā' has been used for the unmanifested form with attributes. So the question may arise that in this verse also the expression 'Avyaktāsaktacetasām' may stand for those whose minds are set on God Who is unmanifest and endowed with attributes. But this interpretation is also not proper because in the first verse the term 'Tvām' stands for God Who is endowed with attributes and form while the term 'Avyaktam' and 'Akṣaram' stand for the attributeless and formless Eternal (Absolute). What is Brahma ? The Lord has already answered the question in the third verse of the eighth chapter by declaring that Brahma (the Absolute) is the Imperishable. There also the term 'Imperishable' has been used for God Who is attributeless and formless. Therefore in response to Arjuna's question in which he used the term 'unmanifest' and 'imperishable' , the Lord answered the question by using the term 'unmanifest' which stands for God Who is attributeless and formless.

The expression 'Kleśo'dhikataraḥ' (difficulty is greater) primarily shows that the imperishable (formless) Brahma is very hard to reach by those who are attached to their bodies. * Secondly it shows that all the devotees worshipping the attributeless Absolute have to face greater difficulty than those who worship God with attributes, from the first stage to the last one.

An Important Fact

Now it is explained how the worship of God Who is endowed with attributes is easy while the worship of attributeless God is difficult.

Worship of God with attributes.

1. Such a striver can easily fix his senses and mind on God because He is with form and attributes. He can think of Him, listen to His life history and pastime and can adore Him easily (Gītā 8/14). Therefore there is less possibility of his dwelling on the worldly objects.
2. It is attachment to the world which causes difficulty in the spiritual path. Such a striver depends totally on God as a kitten depends on its mother. For such a striver God secures what is not already possessed and preserves what he already possesses. (Gītā 9/22). In the Mānasa also it is mentioned that God, like the mother who looks after the child, looks after the devotees who worship Him only depending only on Him (3/43/2-3).

So they easily get rid of the worldly attachment.

3. Such strivers attain the Lord quickly (without delay) (Gītā 12/7).
4. The Lord Himself destroys the darkness born of ignorance of such strivers (Gītā 10/11).
5. The Lord straightway delivers them from the ocean of death bound existence (Gītā 12/7).
6. If devotees take refuge in Him alone, the Lord by His grace releases them from any subtle vice if it subsists in them (Gītā 18/58, 66).
7. They have full faith in the Lord Who pervades everywhere. It is because of their faith that they take refuge in Him and the Lord grants them the Yoga of Discrimination i.e., wisdom by which they attain Him (Gītā 10/10).
8. They believe that the Lord is the most gracious to all beings. So by His grace they cross all the obstacles and quickly attain Him (Gītā 18/56-58).
9. No one can ever remain even for a moment without doing work (Gītā 3/5). So the devotee has to offer those actions to God. By doing so he is easily liberated from the bondage of actions (Gītā 18/46).
10. Such a striver can easily renounce objects by rendering service to others. He can renounce them more easily if they are offered to deserving candidates and much more easily if they are offered to God.
11. Such a striver needs love and faith more than discrimination and dispassion. As

* Strivers are mainly of two types:-
First are those strivers who are inclined to the spiritual practice after listening to religious discourses, having good company and studying the scriptures. Such strivers face greater difficulty in spiritual practice.

Draupadī had the feeling of enmity towards the Kauravas yet because of her faith in the Lord, He manifested Himself before her when she called Him.* The Lord pays attention to the devotion and faith of His devotees rather than their evils (defects). Every one can accept his affinity for Him.

Worship of attributeless God.

1. For such a striver it is extremely difficult to fix the fickle and restless mind and senses on the attributeless and formless Absolute. Because of the lack of any base and because of the lack of dispassion there is more possibility for the striver to think of the sense-objects.

2. The difficulty is greater for the striver who is attached to the body. A striver worshipping the attributeless Absolute wants to get rid of this attachment through discrimination by depending upon his power like the baby-monkey which (by depending upon its power) catches hold of its mother in order to protect itself (Gītā 18/51-53). Therefore in the Mānasa the Lord compares the wise with the adult son while the devout devotee with the small son (3/43/4). Thus by depending on his power he is not free from attachment easily.

3. In the Gītā in the thirty-ninth verse of the fourth chapter the term 'Acireṇa' refers to the attainment of peace after having gained Self-Realization. It does not declare that Self-Realization is instantly possible.

4. The devotees of the attributeless Absolute attain to Him with their own efforts (Gītā 13/34).

5. They themselves attain to His being (Gītā 5/24).

6. Such strivers come to know their evils (defects) late and they realize them with difficulty. But having realized them properly they can remove them.

7. In the thirty-fourth verse of the fourth chapter and the seventh verse of the thirteenth chapter the Lord has ordered such devotees to receive instructions from the teacher through devotion. In this discipline a preceptor is a must. Not being fully aware of the perfection of the preceptor or the preceptor not being perfect, it becomes very difficult for strivers to maintain their faith. Thus it involves delay.

8. They can't realize His grace because they regard Him attributeless, formless and indifferent. So they don't realize His grace and so they have to cross the obstacles by their own efforts. Thus Self-Realization may be delayed.

9. A Jñānayogī also offers his actions to Prakṛti. But it can be done only if his discrimination is fully aroused otherwise he will be bound to actions by having pride of doership.

10. It is very difficult for such a striver to renounce objects by regarding them as illusory so long as he has attraction for them and has egoistic notion and attachment to the so-called his body and name.

11. Such a striver attains the Absolute only when he becomes qualified and deserving by possessing discrimination and a burning dispassion which can't be cultivated so long as a devotee is attached to the world.

'Āvyaktā hi gatirduḥkham dehavadbhiravāpyate'—Generally the terms 'Dehī' and 'Dehabhṛt' stand for the embodied beings. They also stand for the soul or the self. Here the term 'Dehavadbhiḥ'† stands for those who identify themselves with their bodies because in the first half of this verse the expression 'Avyaktāsaktacetasām' (whose minds are set on the unmanifested) has been used for the strivers who worship the attributeless Brahma (the Absolute). It shows that they regard the worship of the attributeless Absolute as superior to other worships but their minds have not entered the Absolute because of their identification with the bodies. It is because of their identification with bodies that they have to face greater difficulty.

In the worship of the attributeless Absolute

* This factor applies to those devotees who have an exclusive devotion to the Lord and depend only on Him. He manifests Himself before them as soon as they call Him. Moreover He shoulders their responsibility to remove their defects also.

† Here according to the Pāṇini formula 'Matup' is the perfix is 'Tadasyāstyasminniti matup' (5/2/94). The term 'Dehavadbhih' stands for those who have identified themselves with their bodies.

the main obstacle is that a devotee identifies himself with the body. So the term 'Dehavadbhiḥ' has been used. In order to remove this identification the Lord has given his teaching in the thirteenth and the fourteenth chapters though Arjuna did not put the question. The Lord clearly explains that the body (field) is different from the soul (knower of the field) in the first verse of the thirteenth chapter in order to remove this indentification with the body.

Here the expression 'Avyaktā gatiḥ, has been used to attain the goal, the attributeless and unmanifested Brahma. Common people identify themselves with bodies. So they face greater difficulty in reaching the Unmanifested. If they cease to identify themselves with bodies, they can attain the goal of the Unmanifested very easily and quickly.

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः ।
अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥ ६ ॥

ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi saṁnyasya matparāḥ
ananyenaiva yogena māṁ dhyāyanta upāsate

But those who worship Me, surrendering all actions to Me, regarding Me as the supreme goal, meditating on Me, with single minded devotion. 6

Comment:

[In the fifty-fifth verse of the eleventh chapter out of the five marks of the devotees having single minded devotion there are three expressions (Matkarmakṛt, Matparamaḥ and Madbhaktaḥ) in the positive and two (Saṅgavarjitaḥ and Nirvairaḥ') in the negative. Here also the same expressions have been used in a bit different manner in this verse—

(1) The expression 'Sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi saṁnyasya' stands for 'Matkarmakṛt'.

(2) The term 'Matparāḥ' stands for the term 'Matparamaḥ' (looks on Me as the Supreme God).

(3) The expression 'Ananyenaiva yogena' denotes 'Madbhaktaḥ' (devoted to Me).

(4) Those devotees who remain absorbed in Him with single minded devotion become 'Saṅgavarjitaḥ(free from attachment).

(5) When they become free from attachment they become 'Nirvairaḥ (without enmity) and also free from other evils such as envy, jealousy etc. In order to attach importance to this feeling of 'freedom from enmity' the Lord while describing the marks of the devotees who have attained perfection in the thirteenth verse first of all mentions 'Adveṣṭā' (freedom from ill-will or hatred). Therefore a striver should not bear the least ill-will to anyone].

'Ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi saṃnyasya'—The term 'Tu' (but) has been used in order to emphasize the fact that the worship of the Lord with attribute is easier than that of the attributeless Absolute .

Though the term 'Karmāṇi' (actions) is plural and so it stands for all actions yet the adjective 'Sarvāṇi' has been used so that all actions — mundane (for the maintenance of the body and of earning livelihood) as well as spiritual (adoration and meditation etc.) and other prescribed actions with thoughts and feelings may be included (Gītā 9/27).

Here by the expression 'Mayi saṁnyasya' the Lord does not mean to say that actions should be physically renounced because none can ever remain for even a moment without performing actions (Gītā 3/5; 18/11). Secondly the abandonment of action sanctioned by the scriptures out of delusion is declared to be 'Tāmasī' (of the nature of ignorance) (Gītā 18/7) and if it is abandoned because it is painful i.e., from fear of physical suffering, this abandonment is 'Rājasika' (passionate) (Gītā 18/8). In this

way affinity for actions can't be renounced. In order to be liberated from the bondage of actions, it is necessary to renounce the sense of mine, attachment and the desire for the fruit of actions because these three bind him.

When a striver aims at God-Realization, he has no desire to acquire objects; and by thinking himself of God, he instead of being attached to the body etc., is attached only to God. When he surrenders himself to God, all his actions are also surrendered to God.

In the Gītā the actions which are surrendered to God, have been called 'Madarpaṇakarma' 'Madarthakarma' and 'Matkarma'.

1. 'Madarpaṇakarma' are those actions which were started with any other aim but are surrendered to God either during their performance or after their performance.
2. 'Madarthakarma' are those actions which are performed only for God from the very beginning. They are performed by obeying Him in order to please and realize Him.
3. 'Matkarma' are all the mundane actions (business and service etc.) and spiritual actions (adoration and meditation etc.) which are performed for the sake of God by regarding them as God's.

In fact all the actions should be performed with the only aim of God-Realization.

A devotee, who performs actions in the above mentioned three ways, in order to attain perfection, has not the least affinity for actions because he has neither desire for fruit nor the sense of doership nor attachment to objects, the body, senses, mind, intellect and actions etc. The actions of a perfect soul are naturally surrendered while a striver performs actions with the aim of surrendering them to God.

As a 'Bhaktiyogī' is liberated from the bondage of actions by surrendering his actions to God, so does a 'Jñānayogī' get liberated, being detached from actions by holding that they are performed by Prakṛti (nature).

'Matparāḥ'—It means 'surrender to God by regarding Him as the most adorable and the supreme'. Such a devotee who adores God with attributes becomes merly an instrument in His hands. Therefore he regards the virtuous actions to be performed by God. Moreover he has no desire for the worldly pleasures because it is not his aim. Thus being free from desires, evil actions are not performed by him.

'Ananyenaiva yogena mām dhyāyanta upāste'—This expression means that such a striver adores God with single minded (exclusive) devotion and he wants to attain Him by depending on Him only. It means that He is both the end and the means of the devotee. Such a devotee chants His name and glory and meditates on Him by having the only aim of God-Realization.

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।
भवामि नचिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥ ७ ॥

teṣāmahaṁ samuddhartā mṛtyusaṁsārasāgarāt
bhavāmi nacirātpārtha mayyāveśitacetasām

To those whose mind is set on Me, I straight-way deliver from the ocean of death-bound existence, O Pārtha (Arjuna). 7

Comment:

'Teṣāmahaṁ samuddhartā mṛtyu-saṁsārasāgarāt bhavāmi nacirāt-pārtha mayyāveśitacetasām'—'Mayyāveśitacetasām' are those strivers whose aim is only God-Realization, whose minds are exclusively set on Him, and who themselves remain absorbed in Him.

As the ocean consists of nothing but water, so is there nothing but death in the world. Nothing in the world is immune from the buffets of death. Everything is perishing (dying) all the time. So the world has been called the ocean of death-bound existence.

A man is bound to face both the desirable and the undesirable circumstances. The favourable and the unfavourable circumstances and incidents etc., by creating attachment and aversion, lead a man to bondage (Gītā 7/27). Even strivers become a prey to attachment and aversion by being attached to their own sects and saints and by having aversion to the rival sects and saints and so they can't cross the ocean of death-bound-existence quickly. Partiality to sects is the delusion which binds a man. So the Lord has laid special emphasis on the freedom from dualities (pairs of opposites) time and again. *

A striver whose all likings are centred in God viz., he has exclusive devotion in God; and all his dislikings are centred in the world viz., by rendering selfless service, he renounces the desire for favourable circumstances, he can be very easily liberated from the bondage of the world.

The Lord rewards the men in whatever way they approach Him (Gītā 4/11). So He declares that He is the same to all beings (Gītā 9/29). But to those who love him only, who perform all actions only for Him and who looking upon Him as the supreme goal ever remain absorbed in chanting His name, thinking of Him and meditating on Him, He straight way delivers them from the ocean of death-bound existence †.

Link:–In the second verse the Lord declared the devotees who worship God with attributes the most perfect in Yoga, while in the sixth and the seventh verses He declared that He delivers such devotees from the ocean of death-bound existence. Therefore the Lord now commands Arjuna to become perfect in Yoga by fixing his mind and intellect on Him as He describes in the eighth verse; or through practice of concentration or through the performance of actions for His sake or through the renouncement of the fruit of actions as He describes in the ninth, the tenth and the eleventh verses respectively.

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय।
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥ ८ ॥

mayyeva mana ādhatsva mayi buddhim niveśaya
nivasiṣyasi mayyeva ata ūrdhvam na saṁśayaḥ

Fix thy mind on Me alone, fix thy intellect in Me alone; thereafter thou shalt live in Me alone. There is no doubt about it. 8

Comment:

'Mayyeva mana ādhatsva mayi buddhim niveśaya'—According to the Lord only those persons are most perfect in Yoga who have realized their eternal union with God. In order to make the strivers perfect in Yoga the Lord orders them through Arjuna to fix their minds and intellects on Him by regarding Him as the most loving and the supreme Goal.

We have our eternal union with God but we don't realize it because we don't fix our mind and intellect in Him. Therefore the Lord orders us to fix our mind and intellect in Him and then we shall realize that we live in Him i.e., we are established in Him.

'Fix thy mind on Me'—it means that the mind should be diverted from the thought of the world to God. 'Fix thy intellect in Me'—it means that the striver should have a firm resolve that he is only

* 'Free from dualities' (2/45) (5/3); 'freed from the delusion of dualities' (7/28); 'liberated from dualities (15/5); 'neither an aversion to disagreeable action nor an attachment to an agreeable one' (18/10); 'casting aside attraction and aversion' (18/51).

† The terms 'Samuddhartā bhavāmi' also include the ideas that a devotee who worships God with attributes, crosses (over comes) all obstacles by His grace and attains Him (Gītā 18/56-58); God takes up all the burdens and cares of His devotees (Gītā 9/22); "Out of compassion for them, I, dwelling within their Self, destroy the darkness born of ignorance" (Gītā 10/11); "I liberate them from all sins" (Gītā 18/66).

God's, only God is his and He is the Supreme to be attained. By doing so he will cease thinking of the world and his attachment to it will come to an end and he will have affinity only for God.

Fixation of intellect is more important than the fixation of mind. If he has a firm resolve with his intellect, his mind will also accept that resolution. If a person's aim is not God-Realization, he may attain accomplishment (Siddhis) but he will not realize God. Therefore a striver should have a firm resolve that he has to realize God. The desire for pleasures and prosperity is the greatest obstacle to this firm resolve. It is the desire for mundane pleasures which conduces him to acquire money, honour and praise etc., and thus the intellect of the irresolute is many branched and endless (Gītā 2/41). But if he has the only resolve to realize God, this resolve is so sacred and powerful that the Lord becomes ready to consider even the most sinful one righteous. It is merely his resolve that he soon becomes righteous and attains to eternal peace (Gītā 9/30-31).

'I am only God's and only God is mine'—this resolve seems to be decided by the intellect to a striver. But in fact he is already established in God even though he may not know this fact. The criterion is that this affinity for Him is never forgotten. A striver never forgets 'I am' in the same way as he never forgets that he is married or he is the disciple of a particular preceptor. This resolve remains established in his inner self without any practice. This affinity remains fixed in remembrance as well as in forgetfulness because this resolve of affinity is in 'I'ness . When even this assumed affinity remains fixed both in remembrance as well as in wakefulness, how can the real and eternal affinity for God be forgotten? Therefore when the self gets fixed in God, the mind and the intellect automatically get fixed in Him and the self merges in Him.

An Important Fact

A common man identifies the self with the body and assumes his affinity for the body, mind and intellect etc. But everyone can realize the fact that he is the same from the childhood to the present time while his body, senses, mind and intellect etc., have changed. He should firmly believe this fact at the present moment (A common man tries to understand this fact with his intellect while this is something which is to be known by the self).

Everyone knows that the self has not changed and the believers believe that God has also not changed. It means that God and the self belong to one class. On the other hand the body, senses, mind and intellect have changed and the world is also changing. Thus the kaleidoscopic world and body belong to another same class. The uniform and permanent self and God are not seen in their manifested form while the kaleidoscopic body and the world are seen in their manifested form. When the self identifies Itself with the mind, intellect senses and body etc. It thinks that It is undergoing change while It being a fragment of God never undergoes any change.

We don't know— 'What is I?' but we know 'I am' without any doubt. We also know the world is never uniform, it constantly undergoes changes. It means that 'I' (the self) is different from the world. If one of the two is known in its right perspective, the other will be automatically known, this is the rule. The self which is the substratum and illuminatior of 'I' is sentient and eternal. It has no affinity with the transitory world. But it has its natural affinity for God. This is Self-Realization. On such realization his mind and intellect are automatically fixed in Him.

'Nivasiṣyasi mayyeva ata ūrdhvaṁ na saṁśayaḥ'—The expression 'Ata ūrdhvam' means that as soon as mind and intellect totally get fixed in God i.e., a striver is not at all attached to the mind and intellect he will realize God.

The Lord declares, "Having fixed thy mind and intellect in Me alone, thou shalt live in Me undoubtedly." It shows that

Arjuna had some doubt. So the Lord uses the expression 'Na saṁśayaḥ' (no doubt). What is the doubt? Generally people think that God can be realized only if they perform virtuous actions, if they have good conduct, if they meditate on God by leading a secluded life and so on. In order to remove this doubt the Lord declares that all these means joined together are not so valuable as the fixation of the mind and intellect in Him, by having God-Realization as the aim; and by doing so they will realize Him undoubtedly (Gītā 8/7).

So long as the intellect attaches importance to the world and the mind thinks of the world, a man should think that (in spite of being established in God naturally) he is established in the world. This establishment or attachment to the world leads him to the cycle of birth and death.

Therefore by removing his doubt the Lord exhorts Arjuna not to worry about his situation after he has fixed his mind and intellect in Him. As soon as his mind and intellect are fixed in Him alone, he will undoubtedly reside in Him.

A striver's only duty is to fix his mind and intellect in God. When his mind is fixed on God, he will not think of the world and when his intellect is fixed in God, he will not depend on the world. Thus without thinking of the world and without depending on it, he will think of God and depend on Him and it will lead him to God-Realization.

Here Citta (the faculty of cognition) should also be included in the 'mind' and 'egoism' should be included in 'intellect' because without fixing Citta (the faculty of cognition) and egoism it can't be said "Thou shalt live in Me alone."

The soul is a fragment of God Who is the only master of the entire universe. But It attracts a fragment of the world (body, senses, mind and intellect etc.) towards It by regarding them as Its own (Gītā 15/7) i.e., It becomes their master. It forgets that It being a fragment of God always remains fixed in Him but It has accepted Its separate existence in the same way as a foolish son in spite of being the heir to his multi millionaire father's whole property and riches, by being separate from him regards a flat of the huge building as his own. But when the son realizes his mistake he comes to know the reality that he is the heir to his father's whole property. So the Lord declares that as soon as he surrenders the so-called his mind and intellect to Him (which are really His as He is the owner of the entire universe including the mind and intellect), he, being free from the attachment to the mind and intellect, will live in Him undoubtedly (because in fact he being His fragment already lives in Him).

The Lord in the fourth verse of the seventh chapter described the earth, water, fire, air, ether, these five subtle elements, mind, intellect and egoism, the eightfold division of His nature which is lower nature (Aparā Prakṛti) while in the fifth verse He described His higher nature the soul (Parā Prakṛti). Though both these natures belong to God yet the latter being a fragment of God is superior to the former one (Gītā 15/7). But the higher nature (soul) by an error regards the lower nature as Its own and for Itself and is thus bound i.e., becomes the cause of Its birth in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21). Therefore the Lord exhorts Arjuna to offer the so-called his mind and intellect, the lower nature to God (which are really His). By doing so his affinity for the mind and intellect, which he has assumed by an error, will be renounced and he will realize his true affinity for God which is eternal and axiomatic.

An Important Fact Pertaining to God-Realization

God can't be realized by a particular method such as meditation etc., because those who depend on these methods, depend on the body, mind, senses and intellect etc., which are insentient. God Who is sentient can't be bought through the objects which are insentient because all these objects can't be equivalent to Him.

The worldly objects are acquired through the performance of actions (efforts). So a striver thinks that God can also be realized through actions such as spiritual practice etc.

His belief is confirmed when he studies the life-histories of Manu-Śatarūpā and Pārvatī etc., who realized God through penance. But in fact it is not so. God is realized only when the assumed affinity for the insentient (Matter) is totally renounced. This fact applies in those cases also where it seems that they have realized Him through penance. In fact He is ever realized to everyone but He is veiled when a person accepts his affinity for the insentient. As soon as he renounces this assumed affinity, He is revealed to him. Therefore those strivers who hold that they can realize Him through spiritual practice are in the wrong. Spiritual practice is useful only in renouncing the assumed affinity for the unreal i.e., insentient (Matter). Without understanding this secret if a striver depends on his spiritual discipline and is attached to it, his affinity with Matter persists. Till the least value is attached to Matter, God-Realization is difficult. As soon as it is renounced, He is realized. So a striver should renounce his affinity totally for the Matter through spiritual practice. This affinity for Matter is easily renounced when spiritual discipline is practised only with the aim of God-Realization.

अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम्।
अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनञ्जय॥ ९॥

atha cittaṁ samādhātuṁ na śaknoṣi mayi sthiram
abhyāsayogena tato māmicchāptuṁ dhanañjaya

If thou art unable to fix thy mind steadily on Me, then seek to reach Me by the constant practice of concentration, O winner of wealth (Arjuna). 9

Comment:

'Atha cittaṁ samādhātuṁ na śaknoṣi mayi sthiram abhyāsa-yogena tato māmicchāptuṁ dhanañjaya'—Though the term 'Mana' stands only for the mind, yet being related to the spiritual discipline mentioned in the preceding verse here it is proper to take it both for the mind and intellect.

The Lord says to Arjuna if he is unable to fix his mind on Him, he should seek to reach Him by the constant practice of concentration.

'Abhyāsayoga' is a compound word in which 'Abhyāsa' means fixation of the mind on something repeatedly while 'Yoga' stands for equanimity. Thus repeated (constant) practice of concentration by having equanimity is 'Abhyāsayoga.' Adoration and chanting of the Lord's name etc., performed with the aim of God-Realization is also 'Abhyāsayoga'.

Only constant practice without 'Yoga' (union with God or equanimity) will conduce a striver to have several mundane desires for wife, sons, riches, honour, praise, health and other favourable circumstances etc., because many branched and endless are the thoughts of the irresolute (Gītā 2/41). Therefore actions of such a person will not lead to 'Yoga'. 'Yoga' is only possible when the aim of every action is only God.

When a striver, having the aim of God-Realization, practises chanting of His name etc., different thoughts come to his mind. Therefore a striver having the firm resolve that he has only to realize God, should become indifferent to all thoughts.

Here by the expression 'Māmicchāptum' the Lord declares that he should seek to reach Him by the constant practice of concentration while in the preceding verse He exhorted Arjuna to surrender his mind and intellect to Him. So a striver may think that mind and intellect can be surrendered to Him (fixed on Him) through practice of

concentration and then God will be realized. But the Lord does not mean so. He means to explain that a striver can realize God through practice if he has a firm resolve only to realize Him.

When a striver practises repeatedly chanting His name, adoration and hearing the scripture etc., his mind is purified and the desire for God-Realization is aroused. When he remains equanimous in success and failure, the desire becomes keen. This keen desire makes him restless. This restlessness for God-Realization burns the mundane attachment as well as sins of infinite births. Then he develops an exclusive devotion to Him and then sepration from God becomes unbearable for him. If he can't live without Him, He also can't live without him and so he attains Him.

A striver does not attain Him immediately because he bears separation from Him. As soon as this separation from Him becomes unbearable, He is attained because He pervades everywhere. The only defect of a striver is that he has not a burning desire and so he can't attain Him immediately. It is because of his sensual desire that he thinks that he will be able to realize Him only in future. As soon as there are restlessness and a burning desire for God-Realization, the desire for sensual pleasures will come to an end and He will then be realized without any delay.

If a striver in the beginning resolves that he has to realize only God whatsoever may happen in the worldly sphere, he can very quickly realize God by any one of the paths of action, of knowledge or of devotion.

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।
मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन्सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ॥ १० ॥

abhyāse'pyasamartho'si matkarmaparamo bhava
madarthamapi karmāṇi kurvansiddhimavāpsyasi

If you are unable to practise concentration, be thou intent on performing actions for Me; even by performing actions for My sake, thou shalt attain perfection. 10

Comment:

'Abhyāse'pyasamartho'si matkarmaparamo bhava'—Here the term 'Abhyāse' stands for 'Abhyāsayoga' described in the preceding verse. In the Gītā the topic of the preceding verse is described in brief in the next verse. The topic of fixing the mind on Him and the intellect in Him described in the eighth verse was mentioned in the ninth verse by the expression 'to fix the mind' which also includes intellect. In the same way the term 'Abhyāse' used here (in the tenth verse) has been used for 'Abhyāsayoga' used in the ninth verse.

The Lord declares that if he is unable to practise concentration which was described in the preceding verse, he should work for His sake. It means that all actions (according to one's caste, order of life for earning livelihood and for maintenance of the body as well as adoration, meditation and chanting of His name and other spiritual activities) should instead of being performed for mundane pleasures and prosperity, be performed only for God-Realization. The actions which are performed for God-Realization according to His order are called 'Matkarma' and the striver who is intent on performing actions for His sake is 'Matkaramaparama'. Such a striver should have his affinity only for God, and his activities should also be performed only for God.

When a striver ceases to hanker after mundane pleasures and prosperity, the forbidden actions are totally renounced by him because it is desire which conduces a man to perform forbidden actions Gītā 3/37).

Therefore when a striver decides God-Realization as the aim, all his actions are in accordance with the scriptural injunctions and they are performed for the sake of God only.

'Madarthamapi karmāṇi kurvan-siddhimavāpsyasi'—Whatever has been said in the first half of the verse by the expression 'Matkarmaparamo bhava' has been repeated in the second half. When a striver performs actions only for His sake, he attains perfection or God-Realization.

As the Lord in the eighth verse explained fixation of the mind on Him and the intellect in Him, the means of God-Realization, and in the ninth verse the constant practice of concentration, the means to realize Him, so does He mention here the performance of actions for His sake, as the independent means to realize him.

As profit acts as an encouragement to a businessman and he tries to earn more and more money and more enthusiastically, so when all actions are performed for God's sake, the striver develops a keener desire for God-Realization and also practises spiritual discipline more enthusiastically. When he has such a burning desire that he can't bear separation from all pervading God, God does not remain veiled but by His grace He is attained by him. If a striver's only aim is God-Realization and he performs all actions only for His sake, it means that he has applied his intellect, ability, time and resources for God-Realization by considering them the Lord's. What can he do more than this? The Lord does not expect anything more from him. So He enables him to realize Him.

अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः ।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥ ११ ॥

athaitadapyaśakto'si kartuṁ madyogamāśritaḥ
sarvakarmaphalatyāgaṁ tataḥ kuru yatātmavān

If thou art unable to do even this then subduing your mind, senses and intellect etc., resorting to Yoga (equanimity) renounce the fruit of all actions. 11

Comment:

'Athaitadapyaśakto'si kartuṁ madyogamāśritaḥ'—In the preceding verse the Lord declared, "Thou shalt attain Me by performing actions for My sake" while here He declares, "Thou shalt attain Me by renouncing the fruit of all actions." The former can be called the path of devotion while the latter the path of action. Both of them are the independent means of God-Realization.

In this verse it seems proper that the expression 'Madyogamāśritaḥ' (resorting to union with Me) is related with 'Athaitadapy-aśakto'si' (if you are unable) because if it is taken to be related with 'Sarvakarma-phalatyāgaṁ kuru' (do renouncing the fruits of all actions), because of the prominence of the dependence on God, it will become the path of devotion. Thus it will not be different from the path of devotion described in the tenth verse while the Lord wants to explain the path of devotion in the tenth verse and the path of action in the eleventh verse.

Secondly in this verse the Lord has used the expression 'Yatātmavān' (subduing mind, senses and intellect) which is more important in the path of action because without it the renouncement of the fruit of actions is impossible.

If a striver does not believe in God much but he does social service and he can't surrender all actions to Him but renounces the fruit of action, the fruit which is beyond his power (Gītā 2/47), his affinity for the world is renounced.

'Sarvakarmaphalatyāgam tataḥ kuru yatātmavān'—For the person who wishes to attain to Yoga, action (without attachment) is said to be the means (Gītā 6/3). It is attachment to the fruit of action which binds a man. So if a striver subdues his senses, mind and intellect, he can easily renounce the fruit of action. If a striver does not control his mind, intellect and senses etc., he will naturally think of the sense-objects and then he will be attached to them and thus he may perish (Gītā 2/62-63). If a striver's aim is to renounce the fruit of actions he can easily control his mind and senses.

Here the expression 'Sarvakarma' stands for religious sacrifice, charity, penance, service and means of livelihood according to one's caste and order of life as well as all other prescribed actions. 'Renouncement of the fruit of actions' does not mean the physical renouncement but the renouncement of the sense of mine, attachment and desire etc., for the fruit of actions.

A striver following the path of action should not remain inactive by thinking that there is no need for the performance of action when he does not want to reap its fruit. Therefore the Lord warns the strivers, "Let thy attachment not be to inaction" (Gītā 2/47).

In the ninth verse of the eighteenth chapter also the Lord while describing the marks of the 'Sāttvika tyāga' (relinquishment of goodness) explained renouncement of the attachment to the fruit of actions as the 'Sāttvika tyāga' (relinquishment of the mode of goodness).

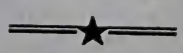
When actions are performed having renounced attachment to the fruit of actions, the impetus to act calms down and old attachment perishes. Without the desire for fruit of actions, affinity for actions is totally renounced and new attachment does not spring up. Then nothing remains to be done for a striver because it is attachment, desire, the sense of mine for action and the desire for fruit which force him to act. He may physically restrain himself from performing actions for a short time. But so long as he has an attachment and aversion, his nature forces him to act. The impetus to act calms down only when actions are performed without any selfish motive having renounced attachment and aversion etc.

This means (of the renouncement of the fruit of action) is very useful for those strivers who have no natural reverence or devotion to God with attributes and form but have natural inclination to do good to others.

Where the Lord advises to renounce the desire for the fruit of action, He emphasizes that it also implies renunciation of attachment because with the total renunciation of both desire and attachment we are liberated from the bondage of action (Gītā 18/6).

The renouncement of fruit (desire for fruit) of actions is an independent means of God-Realization. When the desire for the fruit of actions is renounced, the attachment to the sense-objects perishes and he attains peace (happiness of the mode of goodness). If he does not enjoy that peace, he attains perfection or God-Relization i.e., he becomes one with Him.

In the fifty-fifth verse of the eleventh chapter the Lord mentioned 'freedom from attachment' as one mark out of the five of a striver-devotee. In this verse He mentions the renouncement of the fruit of actions which is possible only when there is renouncement of attachment to the world. The renunciation of the fruit of action as described in the twelfth verse of the chapter immediately leads to the attainment of Supreme Peace or God-Realization. It means that total renunciation of attachment immediately leads to Supreme Peace.



Link:—The Lord from the eighth verse to the eleventh verse recommended four methods one after another in the event of Arjuna's failure to adopt the one. So a doubt may arise whether the fourth means 'renunciation of the fruit of action' is an inferior means to the other three means as the Lord described it as the last one and moreover He did not mention its fruit. In order to remove this doubt the Lord glorifies renunciation and also mentions its fruit.

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।
ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥ १२ ॥

śreyo hi jñānamabhyāsājjñānāddhyānaṁ viśiṣyate
dhyānātkarmaphalatyāgastyāgācchāntiranantaram

Better indeed is knowledge than the practice (of concentration); better than knowledge is meditation; better than meditation is the renunciation of the fruit of action; Supreme Peace immediately follows renunciation. 12

Comment:

[The Lord from the eighth verse to the eleventh verse recommended four alternative means in the event of Arjuna's failure to adopt the one—fixation of the mind and intellect in Him, practice of concentration, performance of action for His sake and renunciation of the fruit of actions. So a person may think that they have been mentioned in the descending order of merit. Moreover in the first three means there is mention that they will attain Him while in the last one there is no mention of it. So they may think that the means mentioned in the eleventh verse is inferior to the other means.

In order to remove this doubt the Lord in the twelfth verse declares that renunciation of action is an excellent means which provides the Supreme Peace immediately. So this means is in no way inferior to the other three ones. All the four means are independent in order to realize God. A striver can follow any one of them according to his inclination, faith and qualifications etc.

The other three means of God-Realization are very well known. But the last means that God can be realized by renunciation of the fruit of actions is not so common and familiar. Therefore the Lord in order to declare its superiority to the other three disciplines and to tell its reward has added the twelfth verse. So the Lord makes it clear in the twelfth verse.]

'Śreyo hi jñānamabhyāsāt'—According to the great sage Patañjali 'Abhyāsa' consists in making effort again and again to be fixed on something (Yogadarśana 1/13).

Here this term 'Abhyāsa' does not stand for 'Abhyāsayoga', it refers to practice only because in this practice (breath restraint or control of the mind) there is neither scriptural knowledge nor meditation nor renunciation of the desire for the fruit of actions. There is 'Yoga' (union with God) only when affinity for Matter is renounced while in such practice there is dependence on Matter (the body, senses, mind and intellect).

Here the term 'Jñāna' stands for the knowledge of the scriptures rather than Self-Realization because Self-Realization is the fruit of all spiritual disciplines. This knowledge is better than practice in which there is neither knowledge of the scriptures nor meditation nor renunciation of the fruit of action.

The spiritual knowledge which is gained through the study of the scriptures and through the discourses of saints but is not translated into practice is 'Jñāna' which is mentioned here. This knowledge has been called better than practice because practice without knowledge of the scriptures is not so useful for God-Realization as is knowledge without practice because through knowledge the desire for God-Realization is aroused and so a striver can transcend the world more easily than he can by practice.

'Jñānāddhyānaṁ viśiṣyate'—Here the term 'Dhyāna' stands for meditation or concentration of mind rather than 'Dhyāna-yoga' which involves the knowledge of the scriptures and renunciation of the fruit of action. Such meditation is better than knowledge which does not involve practice, meditation and renunciation of the fruit of action. Mind is controlled by meditation rather than by mere spiritual knowledge. Through meditation there is accumulation of energy which is not possible through knowledge.

If a striver utilizes that energy for spirited progress, he can progress very quickly which is not possible through knowledge. Besides it the striver through meditation (if he studies the scriptures) can gain true knowledge more easily while a striver who studies the scriptures faces difficulty in meditation because of the volatility of mind. [In these days also it can be seen that there are so many people who study the scriptures, but there are only a few who practise meditation].

'Dhyānātkarmaphalatyāgaḥ'— Renunciation of the fruit of action without knowledge and meditation is better than meditation without knowledge and renunciation of the fruit of action. Here this expression does not stand for the physical renunciation of the fruit of actions but it stands for the renunciation of the sense of mine, attachment and desire for actions and their fruits. Attachment to all the perishable objects which are the fruits of actions is to be renounced.

Attachment to actions and the desire for fruits lead a man to bondage otherwise he is easily liberated from the worldly bondage.

The body, senses, mind, intellect, ability, power and other objects which a man possesses have been acquired from the world. So a 'Karmayogī' without regarding them as his and for him utilizes them in rendering service to the world without any selfish motive. Thus their flow is towards the world and then having renounced his affinity totally for the world, he realizes his natural affinity for God which is eternal. So a Karmayogī need not meditate on God. Moreover if he wants to practise meditation, he can do it very easily as he has no mundane desires, while a striver with desire faces difficulty in meditation.

In the sixth chapter (in the topic of meditation) the Lord explains that when the mind restrained by the practice of meditation, gets established in the Supreme Self and becomes free from all desires. The mind being Matter can't grasp sentient God. Therefore on its affinity being cut asunder with the self he (the self) gets established in God (Gītā 6/18,20) while a Karmayogī having renounced all desires immediately gets established in God (Gītā 2/55). The reason is that in meditation the mind is concentrated on God, therefore due to dependence on the mind (matter) he (the self) has affinity for matter for a long time. But in Karmayoga desire and attachment (matter) are renounced and so attachment to the mind is also naturally renounced and he attains Him very easily and quickly. Thus Karmayoga is better than meditation.

'Nothing is mine, nothing is required for me and nothing is to be done for me'—this is the gist of Karmayoga and so it is superior to other paths (Gītā 5/2).

'Tyāgācchāntiranantaram'— Here the term 'Tyāgāt' has been used for the renunciation of the fruit of action. It is very necessary to understand the true nature of renunciation. The self cannot be renounced by us nor can anything which is not ours be renounced. For example the light and heat of the sun cannot be separated from it, nor can it be said that dark and cold are separated from the sun because they are ever separate. Therefore only that whatever is not ours but we have assumed it as ours by an error, is renounced.

The soul is sentient and imperishable while the world is insentient and perishable. But the soul (having forgotten God Whose fragment It is) accepts the world as Its. Therefore there is need of renouncing the assumed affinity for the world.

Affinity with the worldly objects is limited because the objects are limited. But their renunciation is limitless. Renunciation immediately leads to God-Realization because God is also limitless as He knows no limit of clime, time, objects and individuals. The limitless Lord is not realized because of our attachment to the limited objects.

By the renunciation of the fruit of action the assumed affinity for the world is renounced. Therefore the true nature of renunciation is the renunciation of the assumed affinity for actions and their fruits.

Even the fruit of such spiritual activities as adoration, meditation and trance etc., should

be renounced because so long as they are done for one self, the individuality subsists. Thus he suffers delay in being free from bondage. Real renunciation consists in renouncing affinity even for the propensity of renunciation. Here the term 'peace' stands for the Supreme Peace or God-Realization.

Renunciation of the fruit of action is better than practice or knowledge or meditation. So long as a striver remains attached to the fruit of actions, he (because of the dependence on matter) can't be liberated (Gītā 5/12).

Therefore renunciation of the fruit of action is necessary in practice, knowledge and meditation also. It is attachment to the perishable objects which is the root of disquietude. In Karmayoga attachment to actions and their fruits is abandoned from the very beginning (Gītā 5/11). So a Karmayogī having no affinity for matter (insentient) attains to the eternal peace (Gītā 5/12) in the form of God-Realization.

An Important Fact Pertaining to the Renunciation of the Fruit of Action

'Karmaphalatyāga' (renunciation of the fruit of action) is another name of 'Karmayoga' (the discipline of action) because in the discipline of action only renunciation of the fruit of action is important. This Yoga was lost to the world long before the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa (Gītā 4/2). The Lord by His grace revealed this Karmayoga again, by making Arjuna an instrument (Gītā 4/3) , to human beings in order to authorize them to attain salvation which is generally considered impossible without leading a secluded life having renounced actions, objects and kith and kin etc. The Lord means to explain that a person can attain salvation or God-Realization in all circumstances by performing his duties in a detached way.

In Karmayoga renunciation of the attachment to the fruit of action is important. The actions bear fruit in the form of favourable and unfavourable circumstances such as health and sickness, riches and poverty, honour and dishonour, praise and blame and so on. If a person has an attachment or aversion to them, he can never realize God (Gītā 2/42-44).

Perishable things are the fruit of action such fruit being perishable can't be everlasting. Action is also not everlasting. Then how can the fruit of action be everlasting when its cause, the action is perishable. So it is an error to be attached to the perishable fruit or to desire it. Renunciation of attachment to the fruit of action is the seed of Karmayoga.

It seems difficult to renounce attachment to actions and their fruit while performing actions in Karmayoga. But actually it is not so. It seems difficult when a man regards the objects (body etc.) required for the performance of actions as his and for him. But when he regards them as the world's because they have been acquired from the world and he performs his duty, his attachment is renounced and he realizes God (Gītā 3/19). In fact it is not actions which lead to bondage but it is desire and attachment to the fruit of actions which lead to bondage. When desire and attachment to the fruit of actions are renounced, all actions change into inaction (Gītā 4/19-23).

The Lord declares the unselfish performance of actions better than their renunciation (Gītā 5/2). According to the Lord a Saṁnyāsī is not he who does not perform actions but he who performs actions (duty) without depending on their fruit (Gītā 6/1). A Karmayogī being free from attachment and having renounced all thoughts easily attain to Yoga (Gītā 6/4). On the other hand those, who having regarded actions and their fruits as theirs and for them, hanker after pleasures, verily eat sin (Gītā 3/13). Therefore in the world it is attachment to the fruit of action by which a man is bound (Gītā 5/12). He who relinquishes the fruit of action is a man of renunciation (Gītā 18/11).

In the Gītā there is a greater emphasis on the renunciation of the attachment to the fruit of actions than any other means

of God-Realization. Actions should be performed renouncing attachment and desire for fruits (Gītā 18/6). A striver should be attached neither to virtuous or extraordinary actions nor should have an aversion to evil or ordinary actions, because actions will be over but attachment and aversion will continue and they will lead him to bondage. On the other hand he who performs actions being free from egoism, attachment and aversion, though he slays people, he slays not nor is he bound (by his actions) (Gītā 18/17). Therefore the Lord declares that the renunciation of the fruit of action is better than penance, knowledge, action, practice and meditation etc. Other means outwardly seem excellent but they don't prove much useful and moreover they involve labour. But renunciation of the attachment to the fruit of actions leads a striver to salvation very easily in the same circumstances he is placed in, without changing his place or order of life etc.

In fact God is not acquired but realized. He is realized by renouncing the sense of 'I' and 'mine', attachment and desire for the body, mind, senses and objects etc., rather than by practising spiritual disciplines. As soon as affinity for matter is renounced through knowledge, practice, meditation, penance etc., a striver realizes God Who is ever-realized. This affinity for matter is renounced more easily by renouncing the fruit of action than by knowledge, practice, meditation and penance etc., because in all these means a striver has affinity for matter (body, mind, intellect and senses etc.) because he regards the body as his and the means for him. If such a striver has the aim of God-Realization, and he wants to realize Him by these means he realizes Him with delay and difficulty at last. But in Karmayoga he renounces his affinity for matter from the very beginning and so he realizes God Who is ever-realized quickly and easily. This affinity is the main stumbling block to God-Realization– this fact does not become clear to a striver when he follows other means.

When a striver resolves that he has not to perform forbidden actions such as theft, falsehood, infidelity, violence, fraud, forgery and eating forbidden food etc., under any circumstances even by thought and speech, then only prescribed actions are automatically performed by him.

A striver should resolve to relinquish forbidden actions rather than to perform prescribed actions otherwise he will feel proud of performing prescribed actions and his egoism will be maintained. Because of his pride, forbidden actions will be performed by him. But if he resolves that he will not perform forbidden actions, he will not feel proud because he is not doing anything creditable which requires any ability or power. In this sort of relinquishment also he may feel proud out of folly. Then he should think that there is nothing to feel proud of as he is doing nothing special in renouncing what should be renounced. A man has desire to reap the fruit of action only when some action is performed. If no action has been performed, only the forbidden action has been renounced, * why can he have a desire for the fruit of action ? When a person has no sense of doership, the attachment to the fruit of action is automatically renounced. This renouncement naturally leads him to peace which is axiomatic.

An Important Fact Pertaining to Spiritual Discipline

The three means (constant practice of concentration, performance of action for the Lord and renunciation of the fruit of actions) – of God-Realization have been described in the ninth, the tenth and the

* If a person resolves not to perform forbidden actions, he will either perform prescribed actions or will not perfom actions at all. Prescribed actions purify the mind and total non-performance of actions conduces a man to God-Realization. Total non-performance of actions means the state of freedom from lust rather than the state of inactivity or laziness because laziness etc., are also forbidden actions.

eleventh verses. Out of the three (except the renunciation of the fruit of action) if a thought is given seriously, every means includes the other two also as (1) In the constant practice (of concentration), adoration and chanting the name etc., actions are done for the Lord and there is no desire for fruit. (2) In the performance of actions for the Lord, there is practice and there is no desire for the fruit of actions.

First of all a striver should fix his aim of God-Realization. Then he should realize his real affinity for God. After it any one of the three means will lead him to God-Realization.

The ease or difficulty of a means depends on the inclination and aim of a striver. If he has the only inclination and aim of God-Realization, the means becomes easy otherwise difficult.

As food stuff may be different according to the taste of the hungry persons but hunger before and satisfaction after eating the food are the same; so do strivers have different means according to their interests, beliefs and qualifications but pain of non-realization of God and the desire (hunger) for God-Realization are the same to all the strivers. Every striver belonging to any class attains the same bliss (satisfaction) in the form of God-Realization.

Here the Lord has mentioned four means of God-Realization by making Arjuna an instrument.

(1) Path of Surrender (2) Path of Practice (3) Performance of Actions for God (4) Renunciation of the Fruit of Actions.

All the four means are equally independent and noble and all of them lead to God-Realization. A striver can adopt any one of them according to his inclination, faith and qualification by regarding it as the best.

He should never consider the means (spiritual discipline) followed by him to be inferior to other paths and should never lose heart so far as God-Realization is concerned. If the only aim of a striver is God-Realization, the means (spiritual discipline) followed is according to his inclination, faith and qualification and it is practised to the best of his capacity and with promptness having a burning desire for God-Realization, his means will lead him to God-Realization without any doubt. The reason is that God is omniscient; He having known the striver's intention and efforts etc., by His grace conduces him to God-Realization.

Every human being is authorized to God-Realization because the Lord by His grace has bestowed upon him this human body so that he may realize Him. No two persons can possess the worldly materials equally because they acquire them according to their fate. But everyone can realize God equally because He is not realized through actions.

Dispassion for the world and a keen desire for God-Realization are two important factors for God-Realization. Though any one of the two can conduce a striver to God-Realization, yet a keen desire is a more powerful means than dispassion.

Out of the four means mentioned above the first three specially arouse desire for God-Realization while the fourth-one (renunciation of the fruit of action) conduces a striver to renounce affinity for the world.

When a striver feels that the mundane pleasures are painful and he renounces them from his heart, then having his aim of God-Realization, he will automatically progress towards spiritualism and realize Him by His grace.

Similarly if God is the most loving to him and he can't bear separation from Him, his unbearable restlessness will also lead him to God-Realization.

Link:—The Lord out of the devotees who worship attributeless and formless Brahma and those who worship God with attributes declared the latter to be most perfect in Yoga and ordered Arjuna to follow the latter path. Then pertaining to the latter worship He explained the four means of God-Realization from the eighth verse to the eleventh verse. Now from the thirteenth verse to the nineteenth verse He describes the marks of His living devotees who have attained perfection in five groups. In the first group consisting of the thirteenth and the fourteenth verses He mentions twelve marks.

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ १३ ॥
संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १४ ॥

adveṣṭā sarvabhūtānāṁ maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca
nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ samaduḥkhasukhaḥ kṣamī
saṁtuṣṭaḥ satataṁ yogī yatātmā dṛḍhaniścayaḥ
mayyarpitamanobuddhiryo madbhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ

He who has no ill-will to any being, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from mineness and egoism, even-minded in pleasure and pain, forgiving, ever content, self-controlled, unshakable in determination, with mind and intellect dedicated to Me—the Yogī, My devotee, is dear to Me. 13-14

Comment:

'Adveṣṭā sarvabhūtānām'—A person can bear ill-will to another person in two ways—(1) By creating an obstacle to the acquirement of the desirable such as wealth, honour, praise etc. (2) By creating undesirable objects, actions, persons and incidents etc. A devotee bears no ill-will in the least to any one even though they may act against his principles, become an obstacle to his progress and may harm him physically, economically or mentally because he beholds his own Favourite Deity abiding in them (Mānasa 7/112 b).

Not only this but he beholds and feels the gracious sweet will of God in the actions of those who bear ill-will to him.

Every being (soul) is a fragment of God. So if a striver bears ill-will to any being, it means that he bears ill-will to God. Such a person bearing ill-will to any one can neither be identified with God nor can he have exclusive devotion to Him. When a devotee becomes totally free from ill-will, he can be fully devoted to God. Therefore a devotee is free from malice for each and every being.

'Maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca'*—A devotee is not only free from malice for every being but he is also friendly and compassionate to all beings because he beholds that all beings are His manifestations. 'The Lord is the disinterested friend of all beings' (Gītā 5/29), (Śrīmadbhāgavata 3/25/21). The Lord's nature descends on His devotees and therefore he is friendly and compassionate to all beings without any selfish motive (Mānasa 7/47/3).

He is friendly even to those who harm him because he holds that whatever is done, is destined for his welfare by the sweet will of God. Moreover he thinks that those who are harming him deserve special respect because they are destroying his past sins by becoming an instrument.

Every striver thinks and he should also think that those who are doing wrong or those who harm him are purifying him of the sins of the past. When even a common striver is friendly and compassionate to those who bear ill-will to him, the devotee who has attained perfection must be very much friendly and compassionate to them.

In the 'Pātañjalayogadarśana' four factors have been mentioned to purify the mind.

'Friendship to those who are happy, compassion to those who are sad, the feeling of pleasure to those who are virtuous

* The marks of a devotee described here are greater in number and also more singular than the marks of the liberated soul who has attained perfection by transcending the modes of nature (Gītā 14/22-25), 'Maitraḥ' (friendly) and 'Karuṇaḥ' (compassionate) these words have been used only here, not there.

and indifference to those who are sinners' (1/33).

But here Lord Kṛṣṇa has included the four factors in two—friendship and compassion. It means that a perfect devotee is friendly to the happy and the virtuous, and compassionate to the sad and the sinful.

A striver instead of being indifferent to the sinner should be compassionate to him because the striver who is suffering is being purified of his old sins by reaping the fruit of his sinful actions of the past while the sinner who is inflicting pain on the striver is committing a new sin. So he specially deserves compassion.

'Nirmamaḥ'—Though a devotee is naturally friendly and compassionate to all beings yet he has no sense of mine with any one. It is mineness with beings and objects which binds him. He is totally free from the sense of mine even with the so-called his body, senses, mind, and intellect. A striver commits an error that he tries to be free from mineness with beings and objects but he does not pay proper attention to the point that he has to be free from mineness with his body, mind, intellect and senses also.

'Nirahaṅkāraḥ'—A person has an egoistic notion by identifying the self with the body and senses etc. If a devotee has no egoism but he realizes his true affinity for God, noble, divine and unique traits are revealed in him. But he, knowing those traits (virtues) as divine, regards them as of God, not of his own. So he becomes free from egoism.

'Samaduḥkhasukhaḥ'—A devotee remains even-minded in pleasure and pain, favourable and unfavourable circumstances without having attachment and aversion to them.

The favourable and unfavourable circumstances by making a man happy and sad bind him. A devotee knows the favourable and the unfavourable circumstances but he remains even-minded, he feels neither happy nor sad.

'Kṣamī'—The Lord in the thirteenth verse of this chapter by the term 'Adveṣṭā' declared that His devotee does bear any malice towards those people who bear animosity with him. Here by the term 'Kṣamī' the Lord means to say that he is forgiving even to those who do wrong to him without having the least desire to punish them. He wants them not to be punished by God or any one else for the wrong done to him.

'Saṁtuṣṭaḥ satatam'*—Generally a being is content in favourable circumstances but he loses contentment in undesirable circumstances. This contentment is not eternal because he wants to derive contentment out of the perishable persons and objects etc. He (the self) being eternal can attain real and permanent contentment only by realizing God Who is eternal.

Having realized God a devotee ever remains content because he has neither disunion from Him nor does he need the perishable world. Therefore there is no reason for his discontentment. It is because of this contentment, that he does not attach any importance to any mundane being or object in the least.†

The term 'Satatam' with the term 'Saṁtuṣṭaḥ' shows that a devotee ever remains content and that contentment never undergoes any change nor is there any possibility of any change in it. A perfect soul ever remains content whether he has attained perfection through the path of action or knowledge or devotion.

'Yogī'—Here the term 'Yogī' stands for the devotee who has realized God (who ever remains united with Him) through the path of devotion.

In fact, no person can ever be disunited from God. He who has realized this fact is a Yogī.

'Yatātmā'—He who has fully controlled his body including the mind, intellect and

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* In the Bhāgavata there is description of such a man who is ever content. As a person wearing shoes has no feat to pebbles and thorns, so is a man, who is content ever and everywhere, happy without any trace of sadness.

† Saint Kabīra declares:—

All the riches in the form of cows, elephants, horses and jewels stand nowhere before the wealth of contentment.

senses is 'Yatātmā'. A God-Realized devotee has not to control his mind and intellect etc. They are naturally under his control. So in him there is no possibility of any sort of evil born of the contact of senses with sense-objects.

In fact the mind, intellect and senses should follow the right path. But they deviate from the right path because a person is attached to the world. A devotee's mind, intellect and senses remain under his control because he is not in the least attached to the world, and so his actions are exemplary.

The senses of the virtuous and righteous persons never deviate from the right path. King Duṣyanta was attached towards Śakuntalā; so he had full confidence that she must belong to a Kṣatriya (warrior) family rather than a Brāhmaṇa (priest) one. According to the poet Kālidāsa in case of doubt the inclination of a virtuous person is the testimony to the right path (Abhijñāna-Śākuntalam 1/21).

How can the mind, intellect and senses of a perfect devotee deviate from the right path when the senses of even a righteous person don't deviate?

'Dṛḍhaniścayaḥ'—An enlightened soul has a firm determination that the world has no independent existence while God never ceases to be and his affinity for Him is eternal. An ignorant person considers the world real and attaches importance to it while a perfect devotee does not believe in the existence of the world, for him only God exists.

In firm determination existence of God only remains. Actually this determination is not of the intellect, it is of the self. But it is reflected in the intellect.

Concealing the independent existence of the world and assuming affinity with it, defects of doubt and contrary feeling spring in the intellect. Such intellect never becomes steady. The intellect of a perfect soul remains without any doubt while that of the ignorant remains doubtful. The intellect of the ignorant attaches value to the world and accepts its existence. But the intellect of the perfect soul does not accept existence of anything else except God. His intellect is totally free from doubt and contrary feeling and is steadfast in God only.

'Mayyarpitamanobuddhiḥ'— When a striver resolves that he has to realize God only and he becomes God's (which he really is), his mind and intellect are naturally dedicated to Him. Then why should the mind and intellect of a perfect devotee not remain dedicated to Him?

Naturally a person's mind is fixed on the object or person he loves and his intellect is fixed in the object or person he considers the best. For a devotee no one is more loving and better than God. So his mind and intellect are naturally dedicated to Him.

'Yaḥ madbhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ*'— God loves all, but a devotee loves only God. So according to His promise "As men approach Me, so do I accept them" (Gītā 4/11), He loves devotees.

Link:–In the second group consisting of the next verse the Lord describes six marks of perfect (enlightened) devotees.

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।
हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥ १५ ॥

yasmānnodvijate loko lokānnodvijate ca yaḥ
harṣāmarṣabhayodvegairmukto yaḥ sa ca me priyaḥ

* Lord Rāma declares that the entire universe is equally loved by Him because it has been created by Him. But those who having renounced their egoism and hypocrisy adore Him with mind, speech and action, they may be men, women or impotent persons are most loving to Him (Mānasa, Uttara. 87/4, 87 A).

He by whom the world is not agitated and who is not agitated by the world and who is free from joy, anger (envy), fear and agitation, he is dear to Me. 15

Comment:

'Yasmānnodvijate lokaḥ'—A devotee beholds his most loving Lord everywhere and in all. Therefore all the activities under taken by him with his mind, speech and body are only in order to please God (Gītā 6/31). Then how can he agitate any one? Even then the life history of devotees shows that some people bear ill-will to them and oppose them having heard their glory or action or modesty etc.

A devotee never vexes any one because he realizes that all is God (Gītā 7/19). All his activities are naturally for the welfare of all beings. He does not annoy any one even by an error. People may get annoyed with him because of their demoniac nature. How can a devotee be blamed for their demoniac nature?

Bhartṛhari declares — "Deer, fishes and gentle persons live on straw, water and contentment respectively; but hunters, fishermen and vile persons are at enmity with them without any rhyme or reason."

In fact no person can be agitated by devotees. Even the vile persons who bear envy to the devotees, in their company by beholding and touching them, by talking to them and even by thinking of them abandon their demoniac traits and become devotees. It is because of their generous nature that even vile persons renounce their evil nature and become devotees.

Lord Śiva in the Mānasa also declares "It is because of the virtue that a saint returns good for evil" (Mānasa 5/41/4).

But it is not a rule that all the persons who bear envy to devotees should be benifitted.

If it is held that no one is agitated by devotees nor does any one act against them nor have they any enemy or friend, how can it be said then (as is said in the eighteenth and nineteenth verses) that they are alike to foe and friend, honour and dishonour, praise and blame etc.? It means that it is because of their demoniac nature that vile people can be agitated by the virtuous actions of devotees, can act against them and can regard them as their foes while devotees don't regard any one as their enemy nor do they agitate any one.

'Lokānnodvijate ca yaḥ'—A devotee is also not agitated by any being because of two factors–

(1) A devotee may have to face unfavourable circumstances but having known the reality and because of his great devotion to God, he remains so much engrossed in the devotion that he beholds God everywhere in every being, object and action etc. So he beholds the Lord's pastime only. Thus he is not agitated by any action.

(2) A man is agitated only when some one does anything against his desire or belief etc. But as a devotee has no desire, he is not at all agitated.

'Harṣāmarṣabhayodvegairmukto – yaḥ sa ca me priyaḥ'—When the Lord declares that a perfect devotee is free from joy, He means to say that he remains free from evils or modifications such as joy etc. But it does not mean that he is free from joy but it means that his joy is eternal, uniform and unique. His joy does not undergo any modification when he either acquires the perishable mundane objects or loses them. He ever feels happy after beholding God and His pastime.

A common man is envious of other persons' good fortune, wealth, knowledge, glory and honour etc. Sometimes even strivers are envious of other strivers' spiritual progress. But a perfect devotee is totally free from this evil because for him in the entire universe there is no independent existence of any being except of God.

If a striver after thinking of the spiritual progress of other strivers thinks that he should also progress in the same way, it is useful for him. But if he is envious of

others progress, he has a downfall.

A person can be full of fear because of two factors—(i) External such as a lion, a snake, a thief or a robber etc., and any other worldly loss (2) Internal reasons such as the thought and performance of evil and forbidden deeds such as theft, falsehood, fraud and adultery etc.

A man is in greatest fear of death. Even a wise man is generally in fear of death. Sometimes a striver is also afraid of the fact that his body will become weak by spiritual practice such as adoration and meditation etc., and how he will be able to maintain his body and look after the family, if he becomes fully dispassionate. A common man is afraid of his rival who is stronger than he. A man has to remain in fear of all of them because he depends on Matter (body etc.). When he totally depends on God's feet, he becomes free from fear for ever.

As an enlightened devotee ever beholds the pastime of his loving Lord only, how can he be full of fear?

The Lord has used the term 'Udvega' (agitation) three times in the verse. The world is not agitated by the devotee, he is not agitated by the world. Thirdly He has used this term to show that a man may also be agitated in other cases as he may not be able to complete a piece of work in spite of his best efforts, he may not be able to reap the fruit of action, there may occur undesirable incidents such as earth-quake and flood etc. But as far as a perfect devotee is concerned, he remains free from all such agitation.

A man is agitated because of his desire born of ignorance and his demoniac nature. A devotee has no desire because he is totally free from ignorance. As far as his demoniac nature is concerned, it perishes during the course of his spiritual practice. As he has no independent will and God's will is his will, he ever remains pleased in desirable as well as undesirable circumstances by thinking of God's grace in them. So there is total lack of agitation in him.

An enlightened devotee remains free from agitation, joy, envy and fear etc., because from his view-point they have no independent existence except God. He does not attach any importance to them and so he is not affected by them.

When a person is proud of his virtues, it means that he has inculcated evil propensity of pride while the divine trait can never give birth to the demoniac trait because "the divine nature is deemed conducive to liberation" (Gītā 16/5). So in this verse the term 'Muktaḥ' (liberated or free) instead of 'Bhaktaḥ' (devotee) has been given because a devotee ever remains free from all evils. The evil of pride gives birth to several other evils because all the evils depend on the evil of pride.

An enlightened devotee does not even know that he possesses any virtue. If he finds any virtues appearing in him, he regards it as God's, not as his. Thus having no pride of virtue, a devotee remains free from all evils. God is loving to devotees, therefore devotees are loving to God (Gītā 7/17).

Link:–In the third group which consists of the next verse the Lord describes six marks of perfect devotees.

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १६ ॥

anapekṣaḥ śucirdakṣa udāsīno gatavyathaḥ
sarvārambhaparityāgī yo madbhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ

He who has no expectation, is pure, skilful in action, unconcerned and untroubled, renouncing all initiative (in action), he, My devotee is dear to Me. 16

'Anapekṣaḥ'—A devotee considers God the noblest. He thinks that there is no greater gain than God-Realization. So he is not in the least attracted towards any worldly object. He is not even attached to the so-called his body, senses, mind and intellect because he regards them as God's as they really belong to Him. He is not even worried how he will maintain his body. He is totally free from desires.

A devotee is not shaken even by the heaviest sorrow because he remains absorbed in the Lord's pastime even in the most unfavourable circumstances. He does not desire favourable circumstances of any kind.

Such a devotee knows that all the mundane objects are perishable while he (the self) can never be separated from God. Having known this reality he has no desire to acquire these perishable objects.

It is not a rule that by mere desire a man can get necessary materials for maintenance of life and without having a desire he does not get them. He naturally acquires the necessary objects to maintain his body because the arrangement for the necessary materials for the maintenance of the body has already been made by God. If he has a keen desire to acquire any mundane objects, he creates an obstacle to the acquirement of objects as the desire does not spread and go to others. So other people are not inspired to offer those objects to him. It is generally seen that no one wants to offer any object to those (thieves etc.) who have a keen desire to acquire it. On the other hand people want to offer objects to the dispassionate ascetics and innocent children etc., who don't desire them. Arrangement is made happily by others for the maintenance of their bodies. It proves that necessities of life are provided to those who have no desire for them. Therefore it is nothing but a folly to desire the required objects because the desire is an invitation to suffering. An enlightened devotee does not even expect to maintain his body.

A few devout devotees don't even desire to behold God. They totally depend upon His sweet will and remain absorbed in Him by thinking of His boundless grace. The Lord follows such devotees so that the dust of their feet may fall on Him and He may be sanctified (Śrīmadbhā. 11/14/16).

A devotee who adores God in order to reap the fruit of devotion in the form of worldly objects is really a devotee to the objects rather than to God, because he desires objects rather than God. But He is so generous that He accepts him as His devotee (Gītā 7/16) because he wants his desire to be fulfilled by Him only. The Lord shows not only this favour but also changes the seekers of wealth such as Dhruva into the man of wisdom having fulfilled their desire.

'Śuciḥ'—The body of a devotee becomes very much pure because he has neither egoism nor the sense of 'mine'. His mind also becomes very pure because his mind is free from attachment and aversion, pleasure and pain, desire and wrath and such other evils. Such a devotee because of his external and internal purity sanctifies other people who behold him, touch him, talk to him and think of him. The places of pilgrimage sanctify all the people while devotees provide pilgrimage to those places and those places are sanctified by the touch of their feet (But devotees are not proud of it). Such devotees sanctify even the pure and they move from one place of pilgrimage to another by making them great places of pilgrimage (Śrīmadbhāgavata 1/13/10).

King Bhagīratha says to the Ganges:–

"O mother, those who have renounced all the mundane and spiritual desires, who having a disinclination for the world, are calm in themselves, who are devoted to Brahma (the Absolute), who purify the worlds, such type of saintly souls will destroy all sins with their touch because God Who destroys all sins resides in their hearts."

'Dakṣaḥ'—'Dakṣaḥ' (skilful in action) is he who has attained the aim of this

human life i.e., God-Realization. The Lord in the Śrīmadbhāgavata declares, "The limit of the wisdom of the wise and the skill of the skilful consists in attaining the Imperishable and the Real through this perishable and unreal body" (12/29/22).

In fact the worldly skill is not the real skill, it is a kind of blot because it conduces a man to attach more importance to Matter which leads him to a downfall.

An enlightened devotee is also skilful in mundane affairs. But it is an insult to him if his skill in mundane affairs is regarded as the touch stone of his progress in the spiritual sphere.

'Udāsīnaḥ'—An enlightened devotee remains indifferent to whatever happens. He remains detached from all incidents and circumstances etc., in the same way as a man standing on the top of a high mountain remains unaffected by the fire or flood on the earth. He remains alike to a friend and a foe from his heart though his dealings outwardly may seem different. He is ever impartial because he regards the entire universe including the body as God's.

'Gatavyathaḥ'—He remains free from affliction and worries. He is not troubled by the favourable and unfavourable circumstances, attachment and aversion, pleasure and pain and such other evils.

'Sarvārambhaparityāgī'—Performance of new actions for pleasure and prosperity is known as 'Ārambha' such as accumulation of new articles and starting new business etc., to hoard money. A devotee renounces all initiative in action for pleasure and prosperity etc.

The person who hankers after worldly pleasures and prosperity and who is proud of himself because of his caste, creed, order of life, learning, intellect, ability, position and authority etc., is not a devotee. A devotee is he who is devoted to God. He surrenders the so-called his body, senses, mind, intellect, actions and their rewards etc., to God because He is their real owner. He regards Prakṛti (Nature) and its evolute as God's. Therefore a devotee regards no one else except God as his. He instead of performing actions for himself, performs them in order to please God. He never performs actions to gain wealth or property, comfort or luxury, honour or praise etc. He does not perform any action for pleasure or prosperity because he has a true desire for God-Realization.

'Yo madbhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ'—The Lord has so much of attraction that a devotee is naturally attracted towards Him and he becomes devoted to Him.

"The sages who are satisfied in the self and who out of wisdom have renounced their affinity for Matter (insentient), adore God without expecting any reward because He possesses such virtues which attract beings towards Him"(Śrīmadbhā. 1/7/10).

Now a question can arise why all persons are not attracted towards God and become devoted to Him if He has so much of attraction.

In fact a person (the self) is naturally attracted towards Him because he is His fragment. But it is because of his attachment to the body, senses, mind, intellect, family and worldly objects etc., that he has a disinclination for God Whose fragment he is. God pervades everywhere but He is not revealed to him because of his attachment to the sense-objects i.e., mundane pleasures. When a man renounces his attachment to the perishable pleasures, he is naturally attracted towards God and becomes devoted to Him. The Lord calls such a devotee who has an exclusive devotion to Him 'Madbhaktaḥ' and he is loving to Him.

Link:–The Lord in the fourth group which consists of the next verse mentions the five marks of a perfect devotee.

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः ॥ १७ ॥

yo na hṛṣyati na dveṣṭi na śocati na kāṅkṣati
śubhāśubhaparityāgī bhaktimānyaḥ sa me priyaḥ

He who neither rejoices nor hates, neither grieves nor desires, and who has renounced good and evil, he who is thus devoted, is dear to Me. 17

Comment:

'Yo na hṛṣyati na dveṣṭi na śocati na kāṅkṣati'—There are four important evils(1) attachment (2) aversion (hate) (3) rejoicing and (4) grief. An enlightened devotee is free from these four evils. He realizes that the world being perishable has no independent existence. He (the self) being a fragment of God is imperishable. So he instead of having his affinity for the kaleidoscopic world accepts his affinity for God which is eternal. Thus his mind is totally free from such evils as attachment and aversion etc.

During spiritual practice the more he advances towards spiritualism, the less attachment and aversion he has. When he attains perfection, these evils totally perish.

A common man rejoices when he acquires the desirable objects and gets rid of the undesirable one while he grieves when he gets the undesirable objects or is likely to get them or loses the desirable ones. An enlightened devotee remains even-minded free from evils such as attachment and aversion etc.

At night in the dark a person has a desire to light the lamp and he feels rejoiced having lighted it. He hates the man or becomes angry with him who extinguishes the light and is worried how to light it again. But at noon when the sun shines brightly, he has neither a desire to light the lamp, nor is rejoiced having lighted it nor is angry with the man who extinguishes it nor is worried how to light it again. Similarly when a man has a disinclination for God and inclination to the world he desires favourable circumstances to maintain the body etc., he is rejoiced having acquired them, hates those or is angry with those who are an obstacle to their acquirement and is worried how to acquire them again if they are not acquired. But he who (like the sun at noon) has attained perfection, becomes free from these evils. He has no desire at all and so he does not need the world.

'Śubhāśubhaparityāgī'—All the actions of a devotee change into inaction because he is free from the sense of mine, attachment and the desire for fruit. So his good actions also change into inaction. Evil actions are not performed by him because he is totally free from attachment, aversion and desire etc., which conduce him to perform evil actions.

He is neither attached to the good actions nor has an aversion to the evil ones. Only virtuous actions prescribed by the scriptures are performed by him while the forbidden actions are renounced by him without having any attachment or aversion to them. A real renouncer is he who has totally renounced attachment and aversion to them.

It is not actions but attachment and aversion to them which bind a man. As a perfect devotee is free from attachment and aversion, he is said to have renounced good and evil.

It may also mean the renouncer of the fruit of good and evil actions. But this idea has already been expressed in the first half of this verse when He declares, "He neither rejoices nor hates, neither grieves nor desires." If this meaning is taken, it means that there is repetition of the same idea. Therefore here it should mean the renouncement of attachment and aversion to good and evil actions.

'Bhaktimānyaḥ sa me priyaḥ'—A devotee loves God very much and so he naturally thinks of Him, remembers Him and adores Him. Such a devotee has been called here 'Bhaktimān' (full of devotion.)

A devotee has an exclusive devotion to God, therefore he is very loving to Him.

Link:–In the fifth and last group which consists of the next two verses the Lord mentions ten marks of a perfect devotee.

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥ १८ ॥
तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी संतुष्टो येन केनचित् ।
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥ १९ ॥

samaḥ śatrau ca mitre ca tathā mānāpamānayoḥ
śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu samaḥ saṅgavivarjitaḥ
tulyanindāstutirmauni samtuṣṭo yena kenacit
aniketaḥ sthiramatirbhaktimānme priyo naraḥ

He who is alike to foe and friend, also in honour and dishonour, who is alike in cold and heat, in pleasures and pain, who is free from attachment, who holds blame and praise equal, who is thoughtful, content with any thing, who has no fixed abode and is firm in mind, that man full of devotion is dear to Me. 18-19

Comment:

'Samaḥ śatrau ca mitre ca'—Being free from attachment and aversion a perfect devotee is even-minded to foe and friend equally. Not to talk of common men, even strivers are swayed by the feelings of enmity and friendship towards such an enlightened devotee. But he ever remains even-minded to foe and friend.

If there is a quarrel between two persons over the division of property, one of them has the feeling of enmity towards the devotee while the second person has the feeling of friendship for him, while giving the judgment, the devotee will give a little more to the former while a bit less to the latter. It seems that the judgment given by the devotee is not just but the former will feel that the judgment is right. Such a judgment will create the feeling of equanimity even in the person who regards the devotee as his enemy.

An enlightened devotee is alike to foe and friend. It means that people regard him as a foe or a friend. So he has not been called without foe and friend but he has been called to be alike to both of them.

'Tathā mānāpamānayoḥ'—A man feels honoured or dishonoured when he identifies the self with the body. A devotee has neither egoistic notion with the so-called his body nor the sense of mine. So when his body is honoured or dishonoured, his mind does not undergo any modification (happiness or sadness). He ever remains established in equanimity.

'Śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu samaḥ'—An enlightened devotee's equanimity has been described here in the two pairs of opposites —

(1) He is equanimous in cold and heat i.e., there is no modification in his mind even when there is a contact of the senses with their sense-objects.

(2) He has equanimity in pleasure and pain i.e., his mind remains the same in gain and loss of riches and materials etc.

'Śītoṣṇa' stands for cold and heat i.e., the sense of touch only but here it stands for all the other senses also. When the senses are in contact of their sense-objects, a perfect devotee knows the favourable and the unfavourable circumstances but he remains equanimous while a common man feels happy and sad and has an attachment and aversion to those circumstances.

In the Gītā 'to remain even in pleasure and pain' and 'to be devoid of pleasure and pain' both are used in the same sense. The

favourable (happy) and unfavourable (sad) circumstances are inevitable. So it is not possible to be devoid of them, but an enlightened devotee remains the same (even) without feeling either happy or sad. One can be devoid of pleasure and pain which arise from favourable and unfavourable circumstances. In the Gītā where there is mention of being even in pleasure and pain, it means that one is even in favourable and unfavourable circumstances. And where there is mention of deviod of pleasure and pain, it means devoid of pleasure and pain arising from these circumstances.

'Saṅgavivarjitaḥ'—The term 'Saṅga' means both affinity (union) and attachment. It is not possible for a person to be disunited physically from the body, mind, senses and intellect so long as he remains alive. He can physically renounce objects other than the body. But real renouncement consists in renouncing attachment to the objects and beings rather than their physical renouncement. Had physical renouncement led a person to salvation, every person after death would have attained salvation because he abandons even his body. If he is attached to beings and objects etc., even after death he is in bondage because it is attachment, rather than physical renouncement, which leads to bondage.

Physical renouncement can also be a means to renounce attachment, but attachment should be renounced from the heart. If there is the least attachment to the world, the person will certainly think of it. That attachment will give birth to desire, wrath and delusion respectively and may conduce him to ruin (Gītā 2/62-63).

The Lord in the fifty-ninth verse of the second chapter by using the expression 'Paraṁ dṛṣṭvā nivartate' declared, "Even the taste for the objects of sense turns away when the supreme is seen." It means that attachment is totally renounced after God-Realization. But it does not mean that attachment can't be totally renounced during spiritual practice. When the soul of a striver is no longer attached to external contacts (objects) even during spiritual practice, he immediately attains undying bliss or God-Realization (Gītā 5/21; 16/22).

Attachment abides neither in the soul (self) which is a pure sentient fragment of God nor in Matter (Prakṛti). It remains in the ego of the embodied soul and it seems to reside in the mind, intellect, senses and sense-objects. When a striver ceases to identify himself with the body and has no attachment to it, his attachment to objects etc., will totally perish. This attachment springs up out of ignorance (lack of discrimination). A man is attached to persons and objects etc., because he does not attach importance to discrimination. A perfect devotee has no ignorance, therefore he is totally free from attachment.

A person by an error having a disinclination for God Whose fragment he (the self) is, is attached to the world by regarding it as his. When this assumed affinity for the world is renounced, he becomes even minded. This even-mindedness naturally leads him to detachment.

A Vital Fact

In fact a being has a natural inclination (devotion) to God. But because of his assumed affinity with the world this inclination (love) to God is not revealed. This inclination to the Lord appears as attachment to the world. In spite of this attachment to the world, love towards God is not totally effaced. But as soon as a striver is inclined towards Him, this attachment to the world perishes in the same way as darkness disappears with the sun-rise. Similarly the more he is detached from the world, the more he is inclined to God. After rooting out attachment, detachment also perishes in the same way as fire also perishes having burnt the pieces of wood. With the disappearance of attachment and detachment, there is natural flow of devotion to God. Then the devotee surrenders himself to God and all his actions are performed in order to please Him.

Being pleased with him He offers love (devotion) to him. The devotee offers that devotion again to God. It pleases the Lord much and He again offers love (devotion) to him. Again the devotee offers it to Him. In this way this pastime of give and take affair of ever-enhancing love goes on.

'Tulyanindāstutiḥ'—Praise or censure is generally concerned with one's name. This is an action done by others. People praise or blame a devotee by his name. A devotee has neither the egoistic notion nor the feeling of 'mine' in his name and body. So he remains totally unaffected by praise or blame. He has neither attachment to the person who praises him nor aversion to the person who blames him.

Common people feel elated by praise and pained by blame while strivers shrink by praise and become cautious by blame. But an enlightened devotee remains equanimous in praise and blame, though for the good of others sometimes he may behave, like strivers, by shrinking by hearing praise and by being cautious by hearing blame.

A devotee beholds God everywhere. So he remains unaffected by praise and blame and does not make any distinction between those who praise him and those who blame him. Moreover he does not perform forbidden (evil) actions and as far as good actions are concerned, he holds that it is He Who making him an instrument performs them. So he remains even-minded in praise and blame.

'Maunī'—An enlightened devotee is called 'Maunī' (thoughtful) because he naturally thinks of God. He beholds God in every thought that comes to the mind (Gītā 7/19). He constantly thinks of Him only.

Here the term 'Maunī' (silent) cannot be taken for the person who is restrained in speech because by doing so, the devotees who propagate devotion and divine preaching through speech, will not be called devotees. Moreover if silence (restraint in speech) had made a person a devotee, it would have been very easy for any one to become a devotee merely by becoming silent and there would have been innumerable devotees, while only a few devotees are seen. Besides it even a hypocrite can remain silent. So here the term 'Maunī' stands for an enlightened soul who thinks of God.

'Santuṣṭo yena kenacit'—Other people hold that a devotee is content with the bare means of bodily maintenance but in fact he is not content with mundane objects and circumstances. He is content constantly as he remains engrossed in devotion to God. So he remains even-minded in favourable and unfavourable circumstances by regarding them as the happenings of His sweet will.

'Aniketaḥ'—'Aniketaḥ' is not he who is homeless, but he who is not attached to the fixed abode whether he is a householder or an ascetic. A devotee is not at all attached to his dwelling place and to his body (gross, subtle and causal) and has not the least sense of mine with them.

'Sthiramatiḥ'—A devotee has neither any doubt nor contrary feeling about the existence and form of God. He remains firm in mind about it without any proof such as the scriptures etc., because he ever naturally remains engrossed in Him.

Desires are the stumbling blocks to steady-mindedness (Gītā 2/44). Therefore when a man completely casts off desires, he is called steady in mind (Gītā 2/55). When a person has the desire to derive pleasure out of the contact of senses with sense-objects, he is attached to the world. This attachment to the world is not renounced even by regarding the world as unreal in the same way as a person gets attached to the cinema even by regarding the scene (persons and objects) as unreal or fake, or he is attached to the scenes of the past by thinking of them though he knows that they don't exist at that time. Therefore so long as a man has desires from the heart for worldly pleasures, the worldly attachment can't be renounced even by considering the world false or fake. Attachment strengthens the independent

existence of the world. When the desire for the mundane pleasures is renounced, attachment to the world automatically perishes and then the independent existence of the world ceases to be and the mind gets fixed on God.

'Bhaktimānme priyo naraḥ'—In the term 'Bhaktimān' there is suffix 'Matup' in the word 'Bhakti' which shows that a person naturally has devotion (love for God). But he commits an error that he instead of having devotion to God, develops devotion to the world. So he can't relish the devotion to God and his life becomes dull and insipid. An enlightened devotee ever remains engrossed in the sentiment of devotion. So he is called Bhaktimān (full of devotion). Such a man full of devotion is loving to Him.

The Lord by the term 'Naraḥ' means to say that only he who has attained the aim of his life by realizing God deserves to be called a 'Naraḥ' (man). He who hankers after mundane pleasures and prosperity does not deserve to be called a man.

[In these two verses there is the description of a perfect devotee who remains established in equanimity in the five pairs of opposites such as friend and foe, honour and dishonour, cold and heat, pleasure and pain, praise and blame. When a striver attains equanimity in these five pairs, he attains total equanimity].

An Important Fact Pertaining to This Topic

The Lord in this topic from the thirteenth verse to the nineteenth verse by using the expression 'Me priyaḥ' (loving to Me) four times and 'Priyo naraḥ' (that man is loving to Me) the fifth time divided the topic of the marks of his enlightened devotees into five groups — the first group consisting of the thirteenth and the fourteenth verses, the second group consisting of the fifteenth verse, the third group consisting of the sixteenth verse, the fourth group of the seventeenth verse, and the fifth and last group of the eighteenth and the nineteenth verses. It means that there are five different groups of the marks of enlightened devotees rather than one otherwise the Lord might have not repeated the expression 'Me priyaḥ' four times and 'Priyo naraḥ' the fifth time.

All the groups of the marks of enlightened devotees include the absence of attachment and aversion, pleasure and pain. In the first group the terms 'Nirmamaḥ' and 'Adveṣṭā' respectively stand for freedom from attachment and aversion while the expression 'Samaduḥkhasukhaḥ' stands for freedom from (balanced in) pleasure and pain. In the second group the expression 'Harṣāmarṣa-bhayodvegaiḥ' stands for freedom from attachment and aversion, pleasure and pain. In the third group the term 'Anapekṣaḥ' stands for freedom from attachment, the term 'Udāsīnaḥ' stands for freedom from aversion while 'Gatavyathaḥ' stands for freedom from pleasure and pain. In the fourth group the expressions 'Na kāṅkṣati' 'Na dveṣṭi', 'Na hṛṣyati' and 'Na śocati' respectively stand for freedom from attachment, aversion, pleasure and pain. In the last group the expression 'Saṅgavarjitaḥ' stands for freedom from attachment, the term 'Saṁtuṣṭaḥ' stands for contentment in only God i.e., freedom from aversion while the expression 'Śītoṣṇasukha-duḥkheṣu samaḥ' stands for freedom from pleasure and pain. Thus there are clearly five different groups otherwise the Lord might have not made needless repetition of words.

As there are five different groups, so a person who possesses the marks of any one of the groups, is a loving devotee to God. The Lord while explaining the different marks of enlightened devotees in each group wants to mention that their virtues may slightly differ according to their spiritual practice, fate, caste, order of life, circumstances and temperaments etc. But all of them are totally free from attachment and aversion, pleasure and pain and such other defects; and they are even-minded and remain engrossed in the welfare of all beings equally.

A striver by following the marks of any one of the five groups according to his inclination, faith, ability and temperament should try to inculcate them in him. He should not lose heart, he will be successful certainly.

Link:–In the preceding seven verses the Lord mentioned thirty-nine marks of enlightened devotees. Now in the next verse He answers Arjuna's question clearly.

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।
श्रद्दधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥ २० ॥

ye tu dharmyāmṛtamidaṁ yathoktaṁ paryupāsate
śraddadhānā matparamā bhaktāste'tīva me priyāḥ

Those who with faith, holding Me as their supreme goal, follow this nector of wisdom (law or doctrine), those devotees are exceedingly dear to Me. 20

Comment:

'Ye tu'—The term 'Ye' (who) has been used for those devotees about whom the question was put in the first verse by Arjuna. In response to his question the Lord in the second verse declared the worshippers of the Lord with attributes to be the most perfect in Yoga. Then He explained the means to perform that worship and afterward having explained the marks of the enlightened devotees now He concludes the topic.

Here the term 'Ye' stands for those strivers who having supreme faith in God depend on Him and follow spiritual practice by regarding the marks of enlightened devotees as model virtues.

The term 'Tu' has been used to show the distinction between the enlightened devotees and the devotees who are on the way to God-Realization. By the use of this term it appears as if the Lord loves the striver devotees more than the perfect devotees.

'Śraddadhānāḥ'—In the marks of the perfect devotees there is no mention of faith, because faith is required only so long as a striver does not realize God. Therefore the term stands for the strivers who have faith in God and who try to translate the immortal wisdom (which has been preached by Him from the thirteenth to the nineteenth verses) into practice in order to realize God.

Though in the path of devotion there is importance of faith and love (devotion) while in the path of knowledge there is importance of discrimination, yet it does not mean that there is no importance of discrimination in the path of devotion and no importance of faith in the path of knowledge. In fact faith and discrimination play an important role in all the spiritual paths. Discrimination enhances devotion. Similarly faith in God and in the scriptures conduces a striver to follow the path of knowledge. Therefore faith and discrimination are helpful in both the paths of devotion and knowledge.

'Matparamāḥ'—The strivers following the path of God-Realization regard the Lord as their supreme goal in order to cultivate the model virtues of enlightened devotees. Thus by thinking of Him and by depending upon Him all those virtues are naturally cultivated in them.

This fact of regarding the Lord as the supreme goal has already been pointed out in the fifty-fifth verse of the eleventh chapter and also in the sixth verse of the twelfth chapter. In this verse it has been repeated again. It proves that it plays an important role in the path of devotion. When a striver regards the Lord as the supreme goal by God's grace, he is naturally inspired to practise spiritual discipline and all the stumbling blocks to his spiritual progress perish.

'Dharmyāmṛtamidaṁ yathoktam'—The five groups consisting of thirty-nine marks of enlightened devotees are full of righteousness or wisdom, having no trace of unrighteousness. Such a discipline is like nectar. So it has been called 'Dharmyāmṛta' (the nectar of wisdom). But this path can

be followed only when a striver has the only aim of God-Realization without hankering after riches, honour, praise, prosperity and pleasure etc.

In every group all the marks are full of the nectar of wisdom. So a striver can follow any one of the groups by regarding those virtues as model.

Every striver possesses these virtues partly and he also possesses evils. Every being possesses both virtues and vices. He can renounce the vices totally but it is not possible for him to renounce virtues totally. An enlightened soul possesses only virtues according to his spiritual path and temperament. So the virtues have been divided into five groups. But vices are to be renounced totally, so they are not divided into groups.

A striver keeps good company, but he does not totally avoid bad company. He has self-control but he also loses it. He practises spiritual practice but also indulges in anti-spiritual activities. So he does not attain perfection, he remains like common mundane people. Moreover so long as he possesses vices also with virtues, he is proud of his virtues; and pride is the root of demoniac nature. Therefore a striver should follow this nectar of wisdom by renouncing all vices otherwise he will not realize God. He should try his best to do away with the evils. If he finds himself unable to get rid of them, he should pray to God with restlessness.

All the virtues and virtuous feelings are born by having affinity for the real (God) while all the vices and evil feelings are born by having affinity for the unreal world. Even the vilest person, can't totally lack virtues because he has his affinity for the real (God) whose fragment he is. So he possesses virtues and virtuous feelings to some extent or the other. When he realizes God, his affinity for the unreal is totally renounced and then all his vices and evil feelings vanish.

Virtues are the divine endowment. The more a striver is inclined to God or he holds Him as the supreme goal, the more the virtues and good feelings are revealed in him and the vices and evil feelings perish. When he realizes God, his affinity for the unreal is renounced and all the vices and evil feelings totally perish.

Attachment and aversion, pleasure and pain, desire and wrath are the modifications of the mind, they are not permanent features (Gītā 13/6), like the heat and the sun. The heat can't be separated from the sun and so the affinity between the sun and the heat is eternal and imperishable while the modifications such as desire and anger don't remain permanently even in common men, are very little in strivers and totally absent in enlightened souls. Had these modifications been innate they would have remained uniformly and would have not perished till the inner sense endured. Therefore they are not innate, they rather come and go. The more a striver advances towards his destination of God-Realization, the evils such as attachment and aversion become less and when God is realized, they totally perish.

The Lord in the Gītā time and again has exhorted Arjuna to renounce attachment and aversion (3/34, 2/64, 18/51) totally. It means that they can be renounced, otherwise the Lord would not order Arjuna to renounce them.

In the Gītā there is also mention that an enlightened soul is totally free from evils such as attachment and aversion etc. These evils are transitory. Had they not been transitory, how could one have been free from them? In this chapter from the thirteenth verse to the nineteenth verses the Lord has explained time and again that the enlightened devotees are totally free from evils such as attachment and aversion etc., because they have total disinclination for the unreal. The Lord has mentioned this nectar of wisdom so that strivers may follow them by regarding the enlightened devotees as their model.

'Paryupāsate' —The strivers have great reverence for the enlightened devotees. Because of their natural attraction (devotion) for God, the enlightened devotees are

naturally endowed with divine traits. But strivers follow the perfect devotees in order to cultivate their virtues in them by totally renouncing evils. They may not be able to cultivate all their virtues but whatever virtue is cultivated should be cultivated thoroughly and with faith. No opposite tendency should be allowed to stay. For instance strivers may not be compassionate thoroughly. But they should not have cruelty towards any one. Strivers do not possess these virtues thoroughly, so they have been asked to follow these virtues (nectar of wisdom) as described from the thirteenth to the nineteenth verses of this chapter, with faith. This is the meaning of 'Paryupāsate'. If they possess all virtues of any one of the five contents, they will attain the status of perfect devotees.

When a striver has a burning desire and restlessness for God-Realization, all his evils perish because the desire and restlessness devour those evils. Then he practises spiritual discipline naturally and realizes God quickly and easily.

'Bhaktāste'tīva me priyāḥ'—Here the term 'Bhaktāḥ' stands for the strivers who follow the path of devotion by depending on God.

The Lord in the fifty-third verse of the eleventh chapter having declared that He cannot be seen either by the Vedas or austerity or charity or sacrifice in the fifty-fourth verse mentioned that He can be known and seen by single-minded devotion. In the fifty-fifth verse He explained the form of single-minded devotion by mentioning the marks of his devotees. Then in the first verse of this chapter Arjuna asked, "Those devotees who, ever earnest, worship Thee and again those who worship the Imperishable and the Unmanifested– which of them are better versed in Yoga?." "The Lord in the second verse answered the question,"Those who fixing their mind on Me, worship Me, ever earnest and endowed with supreme faith are the most perfect in Yoga." Here while concluding the topic the Lord uses the term 'Bhaktāḥ' for those strivers.

The Lord calls such strivers exceedingly dear to Him while He calls the enlightened devotees only dear to Him. Why?

(1) The enlightened devotees have attained perfection or God-Realization; but strivers even without realizing Him hold Him as their supreme goal.

(2) Perfect devotees are like His grown up (wise) sons while strivers are like His small innocent sons (Mānasa 3/43/4).

As a baby is loving to everyone, so is a striver loving to God.

(3) The Lord becomes free from the debt of pefect devotees by enabling them to have His vision while He holds that he is indebted to the strivers because He has not yet enabled them to behold Him. So He declares that they are exceedingly dear to Him.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे भक्तियोगो नाम द्वादशोऽध्यायः ॥१२॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde bhaktiyogo nāma dvādaśo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ, Tat, Sat the names of the Lord, in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavadgītā, the knowledge of Brahma, the supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, this is the twelfth discourse designated: **"The Yoga of Devotion".**

In this chapter the Lord, having described devotion to God with different means to realize Him, has mentioned the marks of enlightened devotees. Moreover this chapter begins with devotion and also ends with devotion. In the third, the fourth and the fifth verses there is the description of the Discipline of Knowledge in order to prove the superiority of devotion to knowledge by comparing them. So the chapter has been entitled "The Yoga of Devotion."

Words, letters and Uvāca (said) in the Twelfth Chapter

(1) In this chapter in **'Atha dvādaśo'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are three words, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are four words, in verses there are two hundred and forty-four words and there are thirteen concluding words. Thus the total number of words is two hundred and sixty-four.

(2) In this chapter in **'Atha dvādaśo'dhyāyaḥ'** there are seven letters, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are thirteen letters, in verses there are six hundred and forty letters and there are forty-five concluding letters. Thus the total number of the letters is seven hundred and five. In this chapter in each verse there are thirty-two letters.

(3) In this chapter the term **'Uvāca'** (said) has been used twice **'Arjuna Uvāca'** once and **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** once.

Metres Used in the Twelfth Chapter

Out of the twenty verses of this chapter, in the third quarter of the ninth verse 'bha-gaṇa' being used there is **'bha-vipulā'** metre; in the third quarter of the nineteenth verse 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'na-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the twentieth verse 'na-gaṇa' and in the third quarter 'bha-gaṇa' being used there is **'saṁkīrṇa-vipulā'** metre. The remaining seventeen verses are possessed of the characteristics of right **'pathyāvaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

B. K. Mi
Geeta Pr

Śrī Hariḥ

THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

Introduction

At the beginning of the twelfth chapter Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, "The devotees who, with their minds constantly fixed in You, adore You as possessed of form and attributes, and those who adore only the Imperishable, the Unmanifest–which of these two are better?" The Lord responded, "I consider those the best, who endowed with supreme faith, having fixed their mind on Me, worship Me." Further He explained, "Those who adore only the Imperishable, the unmanifest also attain Me but greater is their difficulty because they are centred in the body." Then He described the former type of worship in detail. Now He starts the thirteenth chapter in order to explain the latter kind of worship in detail and in order to remove the main obstacle in the form of the identification of the body with the self.

First the Lord starts the topic of discrimination between Kṣetra (Body) and Kṣetrajña (Soul) (Spirit).

श्रीभगवानुवाच

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।
एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥१॥

śrībhagavānuvāca
idaṁ śarīraṁ kaunteya kṣetramityabhidhīyate
etadyo vetti taṁ prāhuḥ kṣetrajña iti tadvidaḥ

The Blessed Lord said:

This body, O Kaunteya, is termed as Kṣetra, the field and he, who knows it, is called Kṣetrajña by the sages. 1

Comment:

'Idaṁ śarīraṁ kaunteya kṣetramityabhidhīyate'—A man regards birds, animals and trees etc., as different from himself but he identifies himself with the body. But the body whether it is gross or subtle or causal is also different from the self.

The gross (physical) body consists of five elements-earth, water, fire, air and ether. It is made of mother's menstrual excretion and father's semen. It is also called 'Annamayakośa' store house full of grain because it depends on grain. It is known as 'Idam' (this) because it is known by senses.

The subtle body consists of five sense-organs, five organs of action, five life breaths, mind and intellect. It is called 'Prāṇamayakośa' (sheath of life breath) because of the predominance of life breath, 'Manomayakośa' because of the predominance of mind and 'Vijñānamayakośa' because of the predominance of intellect. This subtle body is also called 'Idam' because it is known by the inner sense.

Ignorance is called the causal body. A man's knowledge can have an access upto intellect only. Whatever is beyond intellect is not open to knowledge. So it is called ignorance. This ignorance being the cause of all bodies is called causal body—'Ajñānamevāsya hi mūla kāraṇam' (Adhyātma., Uttara. 5/9). This causal body is also called personal nature and also 'Ānandamayakośa' (sheath of bliss). In wakeful state there is predominance of gross body and it is accompanied by subtle body and causal body. In dream there is pre-dominance of subtle body which is accompanied by causal body. In sound sleep there is predominance of causal body and a man is neither aware of

the gross body which is sheath of grain nor of subtle body which is 'Prāṇamayakośa', 'Manomayakośa' and 'Vijñānamayakośa' viz., intellect merges in ignorance. Therefore sound sleep is the state of causal body. In wakefulness and sleep a man feels pleasure and pain but in sound sleep no pain is felt, there is only bliss. Therefore the causal body is called 'Ānandamayakośa' (sheath of bliss). The causal body is also called 'Idam' because it is known by the self.

All the three bodies are called 'Śarīra' because they decay every moment. (The root of Śarīra is 'Śṛihiṁsāyām'. As the cover (made of leather) of a sword is called 'sheath', similarly the three bodies of the embodied soul in which it resides and to which it assumes as its own are denoted by sheath. The body is called the field (Kṣetra) because it is subject to constant decay (The root of Kṣetra is Kṣi which means decay).

As the seeds sown in a field yield the corresponding crop in course of time, even so the seeds of actions, which a man performs by having the feelings of egoism and attachment, yield their fruit at the appointed time and thus he is born a god, a bird, a beast and an insect etc., according to his actions and then dies. So it is called 'Kṣetra' (field).

The body is different from the self but a man identifies himself with it and thus he gets entangled. He himself being a portion of the Lord is sentient and great but he considers himself great by possessing wealth and property etc. If he regards himself as great because of his wealth and property it means that wealth and property are superior to him. Thus he degrades himself by attaching too much importance to them.

'Etadyo vetti'—The soul knows this body, it is the knower of the body, senses, mind, intellect and life breath. But sometimes it identifies itself with the body and says 'I am the body' while sometimes it assumes its affinity of mineness with the body and says, "This body is mine."

In the first half of this verse the body has been mentioned by the term 'Idam' while in the second half it has been mentioned by the term 'Etat', yet the term 'Etat' denotes more nearness than the term 'Idam'. Therefore here the term 'Idam' stands for the body while the term 'Etat' stands for 'I'ness in the body.

'Taṁ prāhuḥ kṣetrajña * iti tadvidaḥ'—As in the sixteenth verse of the second chapter those who know the reality about the real and the unreal are called the seers, here those who know the reality about Kṣetra (Body) and Kṣetrajña (Soul) are called sages. The soul is called Kṣetrajña because it assumes its identity or affinity with the body otherwise it is the Supreme Soul Paramātmā– (Gītā 13/31).

A Vital Fact

There is bondage for the man because he has assumed his affinity of 'I'ness and mineness with the body. But actually he is different from the body. So if he realizes the truth that the body being 'Idam' (this), is different from him, he is emancipated. This knowledge about the body that this is different from the self is significant not only for the strivers but also for all human beings because all of them are eligible (qualified) for attaining salvation or emancipation. So the Lord has given this distinction between the self and the body just at the beginning of the gospel.

The body is seen distinct from the self. Therefore it is called 'Idam'. The physical body consisting of earth, water, fire, air and ether which is ever changing is 'Idam' (This). The change in the body is perceived by the five sense-organs—ear, eye, skin, tongue and nose. The change in the sense-organs is perceived by the mind. The change of the mind (its fixity or volatility) is perceived by the intellect. The change in the intellect (full understanding, partial understanding, no understanding) is known by the self which ever remains unchanging. Thus the self is the real onlooker which can perceive and know

* The term 'Kṣetrajña' being the object of the verb-'Prāhuḥ' should have the second inflexion but because of the word 'Iti' there is first inflexion.

others independently, but can never be known or seen by any one.*

Senses can know their objects but objects can't know senses (which are subtler than and superior to objects and their illuminater). Similarly senses and sense-objects can't know the mind; the mind, senses and sense-objects can't know intellect while intellect, mind, senses and sense-objects can't know the self. The reason is that senses, mind and intellect are not independent knower. Each can know objects of grosser form than it, while the self is an independent knower because it is far subtler than and superior to body, senses, mind and intellect.

Though it has been mentioned that the sense-organs, mind and intellect are also perceivers (onlookers), yet the fact is that they can perceive only when they are accompanied by the self because the mind and intellect etc., being the evolutes of Matter (Prakṛti)—(Nature) can't be independent onlookers. The self is the real onlooker.

Now a question arises how the soul which is sentient becomes the onlooker of the insentient intellect etc., because the onlooker can see the object of its own class. The answer is that the soul identifies itself with the insentient matter and accepts its own separate entity as 'I am'. This 'I' is neither insentient nor sentient. For by identifying itself with matter it (man) says, "I am rich or I am learned." By giving high value to embodiment of consciousness (self) it says, "I am Brahma'. Thus this 'I' is the soul seated in Nature which is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs (13/21). Thus the embodied soul has both the portions, the sentient as well as the insentient. The sentient portion attracts him towards the Lord while the insentient portion because of this identity with Matter attracts him towards Matter and thus he becomes the onlooker of intellect, mind, senses, sense-objects and body etc. This assumed identity or affinity is the root of all evils.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord explains what that Kṣetrajña is and defines knowledge.

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम॥ २॥

kṣetrajñaṁ cāpi māṁ viddhi sarvakṣetreṣu bhārata
kṣetrakṣetrajñayorjñānaṁ yattajjñānaṁ mataṁ mama

Know Me as Kṣetrajña in all the Kṣetras, Arjuṇa. The knowledge of Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña is considered true knowledge by Me. 2

Comment:

'Kṣetrajñaṁ cāpi māṁ viddhi sarvakṣetreṣu bhārata'—In all Kṣetras (fields or bodies), 'I am' consists of two parts 'I' and 'am'. In 'I am' 'I' is Kṣetra (which has been mentioned as 'Etat' in the preceding verse) while 'am', the knower of 'I'ness is Kṣetrajña (which has been called the knower by the term 'Yaḥ vetti.' It is called 'am' because of the use of the word 'I'. If it is not used with 'I' it will not remain 'am' but it will remain 'Is'. The reason is that 'Is' is called 'am' because of its use with 'I'. Therefore in fact 'Kṣetrajña' (am) has its affinity with God (Is). So the Lord declares,' "Know Me as Kṣetrajña in all Kṣetras."

The object known is called 'Jñeya' and that 'Jñeya' is known through an organ. There are two types of organs—outer and inner. A man knows objects with the outer organs (ears, eyes etc.) and knows the outer organs with the inner organs (mind, intellect etc.). The inner organ has four faculties—mind, intellect, cogitation and ego. Out of them

* First of all the eye is the onlooker while the form is the object to be seen. Then mind is the onlooker while the senses such as eyes are the objects to be seen. Then intellect is the onlooker and the mind is the object to be seen. At last the soul is the onlooker of the dispositions of the intellect but the soul can't be seen by any one.

ego is the subtlest. Ego is known by luminous 'Kṣetrajña'. This 'Kṣetrajña' is an embodiment of God.

Here the Lord uses the term 'Viddhi' (know) to impress upon Arjuna that he should know that he has his identity with Him, not with the body. As he identifies himself with the body and regards the body as his own, so should he identify himself with Him (oversoul) and regard Him as his own. As the self (soul) and the Lord have been identified here, they have been identified in the seventeenth verse of the second chapter when the Lord declares, for the soul, "Know that to be imperishable by which all the universe is pervaded" and in the fourth verse of the ninth chapter when He declares for Himself,"All this universe is pervaded by Me." Thus the Lord identifies the Kṣetrajña (His portion) with Himself. Further in this chapter in the thirty-fourth verse he will explain the identity of bodies and world (the evolutes of Prakṛti) with Prakṛti (Matter). The Lord exhorts Arjuna to have a disinclination for the body which is a portion of Prakṛti and an inclination for Him because he is His portion.

In fact the body has its identity with the world while the soul (Kṣetrajña) has its identity with the Lord. But the man (soul) by assuming his identity with the body regards himself as separate from the Lord. So the Lord wants Arjuna to know the fact about the body and the soul.

By the term 'Api' (also) the Lord emphasizes the significant fact that in the scriptures He is described as all pervasive. No doubt all pervasive God He is. But in different bodies and different souls is also He. The gist of this expression is that the individual soul is not different from the oversoul. The individual soul is He Himself. one should realize his identity with Him.

The man himself is different from the world but he has his identity with the Lord. So he can know the world in reality when he observes the world being detached from it. But he can have a true knowledge of the Lord by identifying himself with Him.

'Kṣetrakṣetrajñayorjñānam yattajjñānam matam mama'—The Kṣetra (Body) has its identity with the world while the Kṣetrajña (Soul) has its identity with the Lord—this is true knowledge. By the expression 'Matam mama' He wants to lay emphasis upon the point that the knowledge of several languages, scripts, arts and sciences etc., and even of the whole world is not true knowledge because this sort of knowledge entraps a man into the world though it may be useful in the world. The true knowledge enables him to renounce his affinity with the body and be free from the cycle of birth and death. The self is different from the body and one with the cosmic soul. This is true knowledge.

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord said that the knowledge of Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña is true knowledge. In the next verse He further explains the distinction between the two and orders Arjuna to listen to Him.

तत्क्षेत्रं यच्च यादृक्च यद्विकारि यतश्च यत्।
स च यो यत्प्रभावश्च तत्समासेन मे शृणु॥ ३॥

tatkṣetraṁ yacca yādṛkca yadvikāri yataśca yat
sa ca yo yatprabhāvaśca tatsamāsena me śṛṇu

What that Kṣetra is, what it is like, what its modifications are, whence is what, and also who that Kṣetrajña is and what his powers are; hear briefly from Me. 3

Comment:

'Tatkṣetram'—The term 'Tat' (That) denotes first the topic discussed earlier and secondly it denotes distance. What has been

termed 'Idam' in the first verse of this chapter, has been termed 'Tat' here. The Kṣetra does not pervade everywhere nor does it remain for ever and it is decaying every moment even now—it shows its distinctiveness from the self.

'Yacca'—'What that Kṣetra is' is described in the fifth verse of this chapter.

'Yādṛkca'—'What it is like' has been described in the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh verses as emanated and perishable (liable to appear and disappear).

'Yadvikāri'—Though being the evolutes of Prakṛti, twenty-three elements have also been called modifications, yet here the term refers to the modifications such as desire and aversion etc., which have been enumerated in the sixth verse and which are born of the assumed affinity between Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña.

'Yataśca yat'—'Whence is what'—This expression conveys the intention of the Lord to trace the origin of this Kṣetra and it has been described in the second half of the nineteenth verse.

'Sa ca'—'Sa' (that) denotes Kṣetrajña mentioned in the second half of the first verse and we are advised to listen to the Lord regarding that Kṣetrajña.

'Yaḥ'—The term 'Yaḥ' (Who) conveys the intention of the Lord to reveal its true character as has been enumerated in the second half of the twentieth verse and also in the twenty-second verse.

'Yatprabhāvaśca'—The power (glory) of the soul has been described in the verses thirty-first to thirty-third of the chapter.

'Tatsamāsena me śṛṇu'—The term 'Tat' here stands both for Kṣetra and Ksetrajña. So the Lord asks Arjuna to hear from Him the description of the four points about Kṣetra and two points about Kṣetrajña.

In the first two verses of this chapter there is a brief description of Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña which has been called 'knowledge' by Him. But the detailed description starts from the third verse, and so Lord Kṛṣṇa orders Arjuna to listen to what He says on Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña.

In this verse the Lord orders Arjuna to hear the four points regarding Kṣetra while only two points – who that Kṣetrajña is and what his powers (glories) are, regarding Kṣetrajña. Now a doubt arises why the Lord has not discussed the powers (glories) of Kṣetra and why He has not described the Kṣetrajña's nature, modifications and origin. The explanation is how the Kṣetra which decays every moment can have any glory. The worldly people out of ignorance attach importance to riches. Actually it has no power or glory. So the Lord has not described it. The Lord has described that the Kṣetrajña is imperishable, therefore his nature is also imperishable. So there is no need to describe his nature, separately, the nature is included in 'who that Kṣetrajña is'. The Kṣetrajña does not undergo any modifications, the modifications such as desire and aversion etc., appear in him because of his assumed affinity with Kṣetra. So there is no question of describing his modifications as Kṣetrajña is immutable or without modifications. Kṣetrajña is non-dual, beginningless and eternal. As he has no origin, so no question arises of describing from whom he has originated.

Link:–Where have the Kṣetra and the Ksetrajña been described in detail? The answer is given in the next verse.

ऋषिभिर्बहुधा गीतं छन्दोभिर्विविधैः पृथक् ।
ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैश्चैव हेतुमद्भिर्विनिश्चितैः ॥ ४ ॥

ṛṣibhirbahudhā gītaṁ chandobhirvividhaiḥ pṛthak
brahmasūtrapadaiścaiva hetumadbhirviniścitaiḥ

The truth about the Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña has been sung by the seers in many fold ways; it has been stated separately in different Vedic chants and also in the conclusive and reasoned text of the Brahmasūtras. 4

Comment:

'Ṛṣibhirbahudhā gītam'—The ancient seers to whom the Vedic chants have been revealed and who are the authors of the scriptures, jurisprudence and other religious texts, have expounded in detail the true meaning of 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña' by the terms the insentient and the sentient, the unreal and the real, the body and the soul, the perishable and the imperishable etc.

'Chandobhirvividhaiḥ pṛthak'—The term 'Chandobhiḥ' (Vedic chants) with the adjective 'Vividhaḥ' (Various) refers to the four Vedas, Ṛk, Yajuḥ, Sāma and Atharva including their Saṁhitā (Hymnical texts) as well as Brāhmaṇa (the theological portion of the Vedas) and Upaniṣads (the portions of the different branches of the Vedas which contain discourses on Divine knowledge). They have described the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña separately.

'Brahmasūtrapadaiścaiva hetumadbhirviniścitaiḥ'—There is also a reasoned exposition of the truth about the Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña in the Brahmasūtras (Aphorism on Brahma or the Absolute).

The Lord means to say that He is describing the Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña in brief. But if any one wants to go into details, he should consult the above mentioned sacred scriptures.

Link:–In the third verse Lord Kṛṣṇa ordered Arjuna to listen to the six points on Kṣetra and Ksetrajña. Out of those six points He describes the two points on Kṣetra 'What that Kṣetra is' and 'what its modifications are' in the next two verses.

महाभूतान्यहंकारो बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव च ।
इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च चेन्द्रियगोचराः ॥ ५ ॥

mahābhūtānyahaṅkāro buddhiravyaktameva ca
indriyāṇi daśaikaṁ ca pañca cendriyagocarāḥ

The five great elements, the ego, the intellect, Primordial Matter, (Nature) the ten senses, the mind and five objects of senses (This is Kṣetra which consists of twenty–four elements). 5

Comment:

'Avyaktameva ca'—Here the term 'Avyakta' stands for Primordial Matter (Nature). Primordial Nature being the cause of cosmic intelligence and being the evolute of none is only 'Prakṛti' (Nature).

'Buddhiḥ'—This term stands for cosmic intelligence. It is 'Prakṛti' as it gives birth to ego and being the evolute of Primordial Nature it is 'Vikṛti'. It means that this cosmic intelligence is 'Prakṛti-vikṛti.'

'Ahaṅkāraḥ'—This term stands for the cosmic ego. Being the cause of the five subtle elements it is 'Prakṛti' and being the evolute of intelligence it is 'Vikṛti'. So it is 'Prakṛti-vikṛti'.

'Mahābhūtāni'—The five great (subtle) elements are — ether, air, fire, water and earth. They are of two kinds—mixed and unmixed. If each of the elements is divided into five parts and then one part of each is mixed that is mixed element*. If they

* Ether is divided into two parts, out of the two parts one part remains as ether while the other half is divided into four parts and each of the parts is given to air, fire, water and earth. Other four elements are also divided in the same way. Half of each remains the same and the remaining half is divided into four parts and each of the parts is given to the other four elements. Thus the mixture of all the elements is known as the mixed element.

remain separate, they are called unmixed. Here the five elements are unmixed. The five elements are also known as subtle elements (Sūkṣma mahābhūta) and subtle forms of matter (Tanmātrās).

These elements, being the cause of ten senses, one mind and five objects of senses, are called matter (Prakṛti) (Nature) while being the effect of ego they are modifications (Vikṛti). Thus these elements are Matter and modifications.

'Indriyāṇi daśa'—The tongue, hands, feet, the generative organ and the organ of defecation—these are the five organs of action; while the senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell constitute the five senses of perception. Being the effect of five subtle elements but being the cause of none they are modifications.

'Ekaṁ ca'—The term 'Ekam' stands for the mind. It, being the evolute of five elements and being the cause of none, is modification.

'Pañca cendriyagocarāḥ'—Sound, touch, colour, taste and smell , the objects of the five senses of perception being the effects, not the cause, are modifications.

Thus the five subtle elements, ego and intellect–these seven are 'Matter-modifications' (Prakṛti-Vikṛti), the Primordial Matter is Matter (Prakṛti) and ten senses, mind and five objects of senses—these sixteen are modifications. These twenty-four elements constitute Kṣetra. A meagre portion of this Kṣetra is this human body which has been termed as 'Idaṁ śarīram' (This body) in the first and 'Tat kṣetram' (That Kṣetra) in the third verse.

इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुःखं संघातश्चेतना धृतिः ।
एतत्क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहृतम् ॥ ६ ॥

icchā dveṣaḥ sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ saṅghātaścetanā dhṛtiḥ
etatkṣetraṁ samāsena savikāramudāhṛtam

Desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, the body, consciousness (life breath) firmness: this is the Kṣetra, with its modifications described briefly. 6

Comment:

'Icchā'—This term denotes a passionate longing for the acquisition of an object, a person or circumstances etc. First of all the Lord mentiones the evil in the form of desire because this longing (desire) is the root of all evils, pains and sins.

'Dveṣaḥ'—Unfulfilment of desire leads to anger. The subtle form of anger is aversion. Thus the term 'Aversion' includes jealousy and anger etc.

'Sukham'—The feeling of pleasure aroused in the mind by the appearance of agreeable circumstances is called 'Sukha'.

'Duḥkham'—The agony caused in the mind by the disagreeable circumstances is 'Duḥkha',

'Saṅghātaḥ'—This term here stands for the physical body consisting of twenty-four elements. After being born the seemingly existence of this body is a modification and its constant change is also a modification.

'Cetanā'—The term refers to life breath. It undergoes modifications. It remains calm in Sattva but is disturbed when a man is overwhelmed with grief, worry and fear etc. This life breath ever decays. Therefore it is modification.

Common people call the creature having life breath as 'Cetana' and without life breath as 'Acetana'. Therefore the life breath is called 'Cetanā.'

'Dhṛti'—'Dhṛti' denotes firmness. It undergoes modifications. A man deviates from firmness in unfavourable circumstances.

Sometimes he is firm while sometimes he deviates from firmness. Sometimes he is more firm, sometimes less firm. Sometimes he holds virtues, sometimes he holds vice. Being subject to change it is modification of Kṣetra.

[This firmness of three kinds viz., Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika has been described from the thirty-third verse to the thirty-fifth verse of the eighteenth chapter. Sāttvika firmness is very necessary for spiritual progress.]

'Etatkṣetram samāsena savikāramudāhṛtam'—As in the first verse of this chapter the expression 'Idaṁ śarīram' was used to show the distinction between the self and the body, similarly the term 'Etat' has been used to prove the distinction of the seer (self) from the seen (Kṣetra and its modification).

In the fifth verse the Lord described the Kṣetra in the form of the world while in this verse He describes it as the body with its modifications. Actually the world and the body are one and the same as they belong to the same class. As in the second verse of this chapter the Lord described His identity with Kṣetrajña (soul), here he describes the identity of the body along with its modifications with the world. In the twenty-first verse instead of saying that the spirit is seated in the individual body, He declares the spirit to be seated in cosmic Matter. This proves that if a man assumes his identity with the individual body, he automatically gets connected with the cosmic matter as the micro and macro are one and the same. As a matter of fact there is no micro (individual) only macro (cosmos) is there. The conception of individuality is a mistake. It means that the individual body and cosmic Matter are the same. As waves of an ocean are not different from the ocean, so is the individual body not different from the world. Therefore the notion that individuality is separate from cosmos is a mistake.

An Important Fact

When the Kṣetrajña (spirit) out of ignorance assumes its affinity with Kṣetra (Body), evils such as desire and aversion etc., are born in the Kṣetra. In fact Kṣetrajña by nature is totally free from all kinds of evils and modifications. It is affinity between the two which is responsible for all evils and modifications. If a striver realizes that he is different from the body and he has his identity with the Lord, he becomes free from all evils and modifications.

On Self-Realization desire and aversion are totally annihilated. Such a realized soul is conscious of pleasure and pain viz., favourable and unfavourable circumstances. But they don't cause any modification in his mind viz., he does not feel happy and sad.*

The body of a liberated soul becomes supremely holy and pious and he has no affinity of 'I' and 'mine' with the body. His body remains alive according to his destiny. Till the body lives, life-breath also lives. On working hard, life-breath becomes uncalm otherwise it is calm. The Sāttvika firmness which subsisted during practice, remains even on Self-Realization. But on realization the liberated soul has no affinity with modifications—'Cetanā' and 'Dhṛti' as he has no identity with the inner sense.

It means that four evils—desire, aversion, pleasure and pain—which were due to his identification with the body are totally wiped out on Self-Realization. Three modifications— 'Saṅghāt', 'Cetanā' and 'Dhṛti' remain in his life, but they don't affect him.

Link:–When a man identifies himself with the body, evils such as desire and aversion are born and they affect him. Therefore the Lord in the next five verses under the name of 'Jñāna' (Wisdom) enumerates twenty virtues to do away with the assumed identity.

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।
आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥ ७ ॥

* Knowledge of anything is not defecive as while having meal a man may know the taste of a dish but attachment or aversion to it is defective.

amānitvamadambhitvamahiṁsā kṣāntirārjavam
ācāryopāsanaṁ śaucaṁ sthairyamātmavinigrahaḥ

Absence of pride, freedom from hypocrisy, non-violence, forgiveness, straightforwardness, service to the teacher, purity of body and mind, steadfastness, self-control. 7

Comment:

'Amānitvam'—Absence of pride is known as 'Amānitva'. It is the superiority complex because of one's possession over arts, virtues, wealth, ability etc., that engenders conceit or pride. He possesses this superiority complex because of his identity with the body. It means that he attaches too much importance to Matter and so he cannot know the truth. The less proud a man is, the less importance he attaches to matter. The less importance he attaches to Matter, the less proud he is and the more speedily he follows the spiritual discipline.

Remedy:—A striver should keep company with devout devotees, saints and liberated souls. Their company frees him not only from pride but also from many other evils.

Saints honour others but themselves remain free from the desire of honour (Mānasa 7/38/2). Similarly a striver in order to be free from pride should form the habit to offer honour, respect and praise etc., to others. He can form this habit only when he regards others superior to him in any sphere. This is a rule that every person has some singularity. This may be due to his caste (order of life), stage of life, learning intelligence and rank etc. Therefore a striver should offer respect to others keeping their singularity in mind. When it becomes his habit his desire to covet honour is gradually wiped out. He must be cautious that while offering honour to others, he should not expect honour in return.

An Important Fact

Out of all the divine traits the Lord has mentioned fearlessness as the first one (16/1) and absence of pride (16/3) the last one in the Discipline of Devotion. But in the Discipline of Knowledge He has given priority to absence of pride (13/7) and mentions fearlessness at the end—'Perception of God (the object of true knowledge) (13/11). It means that a devotee like Prahlāda beholds the Lord pervading everywhere and so becomes fearless at the beginning. He offers regard, honour and praise etc., to others without having any pride. At last his assumed affinity with the body perishes and he becomes totally free from pride. But a striver following the Discipline of Knowledge does not assume his identity with the body at the very beginning (13/1) and so has no pride. At last he realizes the self and becomes fearless.

'Adambhitvam'—Hypocrisy means putting on a pretence or false appearance of virtue or goodness for the sake of honour, prestige and worship etc. If a sinner in the company of virtuous persons exhibits himself as a devotee, a righteous or a charitable person, he is a hypocrite, similarly if a striver is engaged in adoration and prayer etc., in loneliness and is feeling drowsy, but he becomes alert as soon as he hears the foot steps of someone coming it is also a display of virtues. There is also hypocrisy when a pious and virtuous person in the company of bad persons renounces his piety and virtues and poses himself as others are, as can be seen in clubs and hotels etc. Absence of this sort of hypocrisy is 'Adambhitva'.

Remedy:—A striver should fix the goal of human life that he has to realize God and he should ever be engaged in adoration and other spiritual practices without caring

for what the people think of him and say about him.

'Ahiṁsā'—Non-violence means total absence of violence. It consists in infliciting no pain to any one through the body, speech or mind. Pain or injury can be inflicted in three ways — by one's own self, getting it inflicted by others and by supporting it. Violence is inflicted either out of anger or greed or delusion. Thus violence is of nine kinds. Again the nine kinds can be divided according to the quantity in three parts— a little, more, much more. Thus the number of violence comes to twenty-seven. This twenty-seven kinds of violence can be inflicted through the body, speech and mind. In this way violence can be inflicted in eighty-one ways.

Non-violence can also be divided into four categories according to the place, occasion, time and person. A man may observe non-violence in place of pilgrimages and temples, on occasions such as on festivals, on days such as birth day and death anniversary etc., and to person etc., such as cows, deer, preceptor, parents and children etc.

Total abstention from violence or inflicting pain on any creature at any place and time through the speech, body or mind is called universal non-violence.

Remedy:—A striver should regard comfort, welfare and service of others as his own because the self in every person is the same. By arousing this sort of discrimination how can a person inflict pain or injury to any one? The feeling of non-violence automatically develops in him.

'Kṣāntiḥ'—'Kṣānti' means forbearance i.e., forgiveness. He who has developed this feeling never thinks of punishing the evil-doer either himself or having him punished by others in anyway. Even by having power he does not nurse any thought of revenge upon him.

Remedy:—(1) Forgiveness is self-evident because the self is free from all modifications and evils. So a striver should have a firm belief that he remains unaffected by evils and wrongs done to him. This belief naturally develops forgiveness

(2) He beholds the self present in all beings (6/29). If while having a meal the tongue is chewed, a person is not angry with his teeth because the tongue and the teeth both are his own limbs, similarly the same self abides in all the beings. So the person possessing the virtue of forgiveness never entertains the idea of punishing the wrong-doer.

'Ārjavam'—It means straight forwardness of body, mind and speech. No sense of ornamentation in the body. Simplicity in living, natural straightforwardness in behaviour, absence of arrogance—this is straightforwardness of the body. Absence of crookedness, deceit, envy and aversion etc., and serenity, benevolence and compassion this is straightforwardness of mind. Absence of taunt, censure, malicious gossip and pinching harsh language and use of simple, true, agreeable and wholesome language—this is straightforwardness of speech.

Remedy:—A man by assuming his affinity with the gross, subtle and causal bodies regards himself superior to others. So he does not possess straightforwardness of mind, speech and behaviour. If he renounces this assumed affinity with the body and has an eye on the self, he becomes straightforwardness.

Ācāryopāsanam'—The teacher who imparts knowledge and teaches good precepts is called an Ācārya. If any one serves such type of teachers, he is benefitted. But here the term 'Ācārya' denotes the liberated soul. Bowing to him, paying reverence to him and serving him with body, mind and speech in order to make him happy — this is service to him. But real service consists in translating his principles into practice. The service rendered to the body of a body-conscious man is regarded as service to him. But to render service to the body of a realized soul is not service in its real sense. It is only partial service.

In the Discipline of Devotion there is not

so much need of a preceptor as it is in the Discipline of Knowledge because a devotee following the path of devotion entirely depends on God. So the Lord by his grace provides gain and security (9/22), removes all difficulties and obstacles (18/58) and enables him to behold the Divine presence within himself (10/11). But in the Discipline of Knowledge a striver depends on his spiritual practice which has some defects such as follows—

(1) A striver having received knowledge through the scriptures and saints assumes that he is different from the body and so he attains peace and he thinks that he has realized the self. But when he comes across favourable and unfavourable circumstances he feels pleasure and pain. It means that he has not realized the self.

(2) When any one calls him by his name he thinks he is that person. It means that he is still established in the body.

(3) An emancipated soul has natural discrimination between the sentient and the insentient. But a striver discriminates the real from the unreal during wakefulness and he forgets it during sleep. He gets hold of this discrimination again while he awakes from sleep.

(4) When a striver serves the saints and preceptor and takes an active part in good company, he thinks that he should be considered superior to others by the saints and the preceptor.

Thus a striver regards his imperfect knowledge as perfect. So the Lord by the term 'Ācāryopāsanam' wants to emphasize the fact that a striver following the path of knowledge should practise spiritual discipline under the guidance of the teacher. In the thirty-fourth verse of the fourth chapter also Lord Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna, "Go to the liberated souls, prostrate yourself at their feet, render them all forms of service, and question them with a guileless heart, then they will unfold knowledge to you." In this way the wise men remove the defects of the striver, which he himself does not know, easily and enable him to realize the Lord.

A striver should go to such a preceptor who according to him is endowed with the following traits.

1. He should be a liberated soul.
2. He should know the Disciplines of Action, Knowledge and Devotion etc., in the right perspective.
3. His company and words remove doubts naturally.
4. His company gives solace and peace.
5. His relationship with the striver is only for his welfare without having any selfish motive.
6. He doesn't expect anything of the striver in the least.
7. All his activities are directed towards the welfare of the strivers.
8. His company enhances the spiritual inclination of the strivers.
9. His company, sight, discourses and remembrance remove demoniac traits and develop divine traits in the strivers.
10. He is uncommon and singular and has no equal.

So a striver should serve and obey such a preceptor with faith and reverence. He should live with the preceptor only for his emancipation. He should not reck his brain in what his preceptor does and what he does not do, why he does so and so on. He should depend on his preceptor and act according to his behest and hints. If such a preceptor does not accept the striver as his disciple formally, the striver should not insist on it. He should accept him as his preceptor by heart.

If such a liberated soul is not available, the striver should take refuge in the Lord. By doing so either the Lord Himself guides him as a preceptor or makes a preceptor available.

Remedy:— The striver who has the aim of God-Realization should serve the saints from his heart because their grace bears quick fruit. He should have this conviction and act accordingly.

An Important Fact

A disciple should serve his teacher. If a

disciple performs his duty scrupulously, his affinity with the world is renounced and he gets identified with the teacher viz., virtues of his teacher develop in him. Having renounced affinity with the world, he attains salvation and having identified himself with the teacher, he develops devotion. With this identification he does not remain a disciple and he is not controlled by the scriptures etc. But if a disciple does not perform his duty scrupulously, he will remain only a nominal disciple, not a real one. Without remaining a real disciple, his affinity with the world will not be renounced and he'll not get identified with the teacher. Thus he will remain a slave to the world.

If a disciple expects of his teacher that the latter will lead him to salvation—'It is also a bondage for the disciple. A disciple should surrender himself to his preceptor without having any will of his own. He should become a yesman to his preceptor's will.

It is the foremost duty of the preceptor to emancipate his disciple. If he does not perform his duty, he is a nominal preceptor. If he has a desire to receive anything (money, respect, praise etc.) from his disciple, he is not the teacher but hs is a slave to the disciple.

'Śaucam'—'Śaucam' means external and internal purity. The body is purified by cleaning it with water and earth etc., while the mind is purified by having divine traits such as mercy, forgiveness and generosity etc.

Remedy:—The body is made of filthy materials. It may be cleaned again and again, yet it contains filth. By knowing the fact that it is full of filth, a striver becomes indifferent to it.

Earning money by truthful and honest means according to one's caste and stage of life, without laying claim to others' property etc., and purity of diet purify the mind.

'Sthairyam'—It denotes steadfastness or firmness. A striver should be firm in his aim of God-Realization in the face of difficulties, dangers and obstacles.

Remedy:—(1) The people attached to worldly pleasures and prosperity, can't have the determinate intellect concentrated on God (Gītā 2/44). So a striver should renounce this attachment to worldly pleasures and prosperity.

(2) A striver should remain firm in whatever he decides even on insignificant tasks. By doing so he forms a habit of being firm in other spheres also.

(3) The more faith a striver has in saints and the scriptures, the more firm he is.

'Ātmavinigrahaḥ'—Here the term 'Ātmā' stands for the mind, and control over the mind is 'Ātmavinigrahaḥ'. Some thoughts come to the mind and they disappear quickly. They are called 'Sphuraṇās' (Fleeting thoughts). But when the mind is attached to that thought, it becomes a 'Saṅkalpa' (pursuit or projection of the mind). 'Sphuraṇā' is just like the image in the mirror, the mirror does not catch the image, while 'Saṅkalpa' is like the film in a camera which catches the image. A man is attached to the thoughts by having attachment and aversion for them. Fleeting thoughts are destroyed by practice while pursuits of the mind are destroyed by dispassion. Thus the mind can be controlled by practice and dispassion (Gītā 6/35).

Remedy:—(Refer to the explanation of the twenty-sixth verse of the sixth chapter for controlling the mind).

इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहङ्कार एव च।
जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥ ८ ॥

indriyārtheṣu vairāgyamanahaṅkāra eva ca
janmamṛtyujarāvyādhiduḥkhadoṣānudarśanam

Dispassion towards the objects of senses and absence of egoism; constant perception of evil and misery in birth, death, old age and disease. 8

Comment:

'Indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam'—It denotes absence of attraction and attachment for all the objects of senses of this world as well as the next world in the form of sound and touch etc., which are relished by the senses. For the maintenance of his life a striver should not have attachment and passion etc., with sense-objects even during physical contact with them.

Remedy:—(1) Attachment to the objects of senses develops a sense of importance for them which leads to sins and deprives a striver of God-Realization. Only by effacing attachment we can get established in God. This conviction develops detachment from sense-objects.

(2) Even the great kings and emperors could not enjoy the sensual pleasures for ever. Their bodies decayed and they died. This thought develops dispassion.

(3) These sensual enjoyments lead persons to grief and worry only. The sense enjoyment doesn't bless one with any eminence and singularity. This thought develops dispassion.

'Anahaṅkāra eva ca'—Everyone feels 'I am'. Then identification of 'I' with the body gives birth to 'I am body'. The feeling 'I am body' gives birth to egoism. This identification of the self with the body is the cause of a man's birth in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21). Actually this egoism has no existence of its own but it emanates from the identification of the self with the body. But when a striver distinguishes the sentient from the insentient his egoism disappears. Thus strivers can be free from this feeling of egoism. The affinity with the worldly objects and the feeling of superiority because of one's renunciation, dispassion etc., give birth to pride. Here the term 'Anahaṅkāra' denotes absence of pride and egoism both.

When a man awakes from his sleep, he first of all realizes 'I am'. Then he realizes that he belongs to a particular caste or creed etc. This is an order to realize the things. Similarly there is an order for freedom from the feeling of egoism. First a striver renounces the pride of wealth etc., which he has because of his assumed affinity with the gross body. Secondly his pride of doership which he has because of his affinity with the organs of actions is destroyed. Then the pride of knowership which he has because of the predominance of intellect, perishes. At last his egoism disappears. Then only the Self which is Truth, Knowledge, and Bliss remains.

Remedy:—(1) Superiority complex leads to pride. So a striver instead of finding fault with others should find fault in himself and try to get rid of his faults.

(2) A striver should realize that the same soul pervades all the bodies. So he is in no way different from other persons. Through ignorance taking the all-pervadig soul as confined to the body only, he becomes one with the body. As by having affinity with time, intellect and speech, he regards himself 'I am here', 'I am wise', 'I am a preacher'. To deny this affinity is a remedy to be free from egoism.

(3) In the scriptures the Lord has been mentioned as Truth, Consciousness (Knowledge) and Bliss. These are the three names of the Lord. They don't denote three different entities. Keeping the goal in view, denoted even by any one of these three names, a striver can be free from thoughts. Being free from thoughts he can realize his automatic identity with the Absolute and be free from egoism.

(a) **'Sat' (Truth or Reality):**—The Lord had been since ever, has been ever and remains for ever. He is neither born nor destroyed. He neither increases nor decreases. He always remains the same. Reflecting this way through intellect one can become free from all sorts of worldly thoughts. Thus being free from thoughts the striver snaps his ties with the intellect and realizes his axiomatic identity with the self. On such realization pride goes away.

(b) **'Cit'**—As 'I' is the illuminator and the body, senses etc., are illumined, so is consciousness the illuminator and I, thou,

this and that are illumined *. They are quite distinct from the illuminator. So 'I', 'thou', 'this', and 'that' are quite distinct from the over soul. In this way getting established in that consciousness the self is realized and egoism is destroyed.

(c) **'Ānanda' (Bliss)**—Intellect can know the Matter (insentient world) only. It has no access beyond it. In order to know the divine, it is indispensable to renounce affinity with intellect. Establishment of the self in the Supreme is the means to renounce this affinity. Then only the supreme in the form of 'Bliss' remains, Who is also 'Knowledge' and 'Truth'. Thus a striver is freed from egoism.

'Janmamṛtyujarāvyādhiduḥkhadoṣānudarśanam'—As a pitcher is baked in the potter's kiln, the helpless child burns in the womb of the mother. During the process of birth it has to bear unbearable pain while coming out of the womb. A striver should constantly think of the evil of pain in birth.

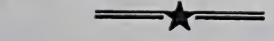
No one can escape death, it is inevitable for one who is born. When a man under compulsion has to leave the body, the residence and wealth etc., which he regarded as his own throughout his life but he never hopes to regain, then due to attachment he undergoes a lot of suffering. Moreover when a man dies, he suffers as much pain as he suffers when thousands of scorpions sting him all at once. Thus a striver should perceive evil in death.

In old age the body and the limbs become feeble, the man can't move easily. He can't digest the food. The members of the family insult him. He is reduced to a helpless state. He is very much sad by thinking of his glorious past. Thus the evil of old age should be perceived.

This body is the abode of various terrible diseases which are very painful. So there should be constant perception of evil in diseases.

By perceiving evil in them, he should think that they are the result of his past sins and evil actions. By thinking so he develops dispassion for the perishable things, objects and bodies etc. It means that perception of evil in life, death, old age and disease etc., leads to dispassion because attachment to the sensual pleasures i.e., contact with these Guṇas (Qualities or modes) is responsible for the birth of the soul in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21) and rebirth is the abode of pain (Gītā 8/15).

Affinity with Matter (Nature) and attaching importance to it is the root of all evils. The soul being a portion of the Lord is pure by nature while evils are impure. So they belong to two different classes. Thus the embodied soul is oppressed by evils which are his own creation. It is also declared in the Mānasa that the soul is sentient, pure and naturally a heap of bliss (Mānasa 7/117/1). So evils and pains are not pleasing to it. But by identifying itself with the body it always suffers. Therefore the Lord emphasizes to wipe out the assumption of the identity of the self with the body by viewing evil in birth and death etc.



असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।
नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥ ९ ॥

asaktiranabhiṣvaṅgaḥ putradāragṛhādiṣu
nityaṁ ca samacittatvamiṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣu

Non-attachment, non-identification of the self with son, wife, home and the like and equanimity in all desirable and undesirable happenings. 9

* A businessman heard that in one firm there was profit while in the other one there was loss. Thus profit and loss are different but there is no difference in the knowledge about the two, knowledge is the same. Similarly 'I', 'You', 'This' and 'That' are different but their illuminator (knowledge) is the same. In that light of knowledge all the actions in 'I', 'You', 'This' and 'That' are performed.

Comment:

'Asakti'—Attachment to the perishable worldly objects, persons and circumstances etc., is 'Sakti'. Absence of that attachment is called 'Asakti'. A man is attached to them in order to seek pleasure from them. He feels pleasure while there is contact. But real joy reveals itself with the termination of the contact (Gītā 6/23). So it is indispensable to renounce the attachment for the mundane.

Remedy:—The pleasure which is derived from the contact of the senses with their objects, seems like nectar at first but is like poison at the end (Gītā 18/38). One, who enjoys the pleasures born of contact, has to bear sufferings. So by thinking of their result a striver is not attached to them.

'Anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ putradāragṛhādiṣu'—Close association with one's sons, wife, house, wealth and cattle etc., is really assumed. A man is so much identified * with them that he regards their sickness and death etc., as his own. So a man should not identify himself with them.

Remedy:—Render service to your kith and kin without expecting any service in return. If they take pleasure in serving you, accept their service without deriving any pleasure out of it.

'Nityaṁ ca samacittatvamiṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣu'—Absence of joy and attachment in the favourable circumstances and absence of grief and aversion in the unfavourable circumstances is equanimity. In that state a striver remains unaffected in all the desirable and undesirable happenings. In 2/48 the Lord has called it 'Equanimity' (Evenness of mind) in success and failure.

Remedy:—A striver should utilize the desirable happenings and circumstances to render service to the beings of the world without any selfish motive. Similarly in undesirable happenings and circumstances he should renounce the desire to receive desirable circumstances. He should feel neither happy in agreeable circumstances nor sad in disagreeable ones.

He should have a firm belief that the desirable as well as the undesirable circumstances are the means to realize God. So he has to transcend them. Thus a striver attains equanimity.

मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।
विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥ १० ॥

mayi cānanyayogena bhaktiravyabhicāriṇī
viviktadeśasevitvamaratirjanasaṁsadi

Unswerving devotion to Me with whole hearted (exclusive) discipline, resort to solitary places, dislike for the worldly people. 10

Comment:

'Mayi cānanyayogena bhaktiravyabhicāriṇī'—Having dependence on the world a striver's body-consciousness remains in tact. This 'ego' is the main hurdle in Self-Realization. To remove this hurdle the Lord declares that exclusive devotion is a means to Self-Realization. In simple words it means that through devotion ego is easily wiped out. Total dependence only on Him and His grace is called whole hearted discipline.

Having consummate and unadulterated love for God is unswerving devotion to Him. It means that He is both the means and the end. This is unswerving devotion with whole hearted devotion.

A striver following the discipline of Knowledge also, having an aptitude for devotion by depending on the Lord,

* Proper dealings and rendering of service to sons and wife is not identification, it is rather non-attachment which leads to immortality.

attains Self-Realization. The Lord mentioned this unswerving devotion as a means to transcend the three Guṇas–(qualities) (Gītā 14/26).

Doubt:—Here the Lord has mentioned devotion as a means for Self-Realization while in the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth verses of the eighteenth chapter he mentions knowledge as a means to attain devotion Why?

Answer:—As devotion is of two kinds— as a means and as an end; so is knowledge of two kinds— as a means and as an end. Both in the end are one and the same like the two faces of the same coin. In the end both (as means) are the methods to attain devotion and knowledge (as end). Therefore both the statements— devotion as the means for Self-Realization and knowledge as the means to attain devotion are justified. Therefore a striver according to his past and present propensities should follow any one of the Disciplines of Action or Knowledge or Devotion. He should be very cautious that His only aim is God-Realization, not the world. With this aim he attains God with his own discipline.

Doubt:—Why has the Lord mentioned His devotion as a virtue which makes for Jñāna (wisdom) ? Does a striver following the Discipline of Knowledge practise devotion ?

Answer:—The strivers following the Discipline of Knowledge are of two kinds those having predominence of feelings (devotion) and others having predominence of knowledge.

(1) The striver who has predominence of devotion wants to know the reality by depending upon God (7/6; 13/18). The terms 'Mām' (Me) and 'Mama' (My) in the second verse; Me (From me) in the third verse; 'Mayi' (To me) in this tenth verse and 'Madbhaktaḥ' (My devotee) and 'Madbhāvāya' (To my being) in the eighteenth verse of this chapter denote that upto the eighteenth verse there is the context of the striver in whom devotion predominates. But from the nineteenth to the thirty-fourth verses no such term as 'I' 'Me' or 'My' etc., has been used which indicates that there is the description of the striver in whom knowledge predominates. So here devotion is a means for Self-Realization.

Secondly as butter or milk with other ingredients of Sāttvika food as well as alone promotes strength and health, similarly devotion to the Lord with the Discipline of Knowledge as well as alone makes a striver eligible for God-Realization and alone also conduces him to transcend the thee modes. (Gītā 14/26). According to Śrī Patañjali also, devotion is one of the eight yogic practices as well as an independent means for God-Realization. Thus devotion occupies an important place even in the Discipline of Knowledge.

(2) The striver having predominence of knowledge is one who endowed with discrimination and dispassion, distinguishing the real (spirit) from the unreal (Matter) wants to know the truth (Gītā 13/19-34).

Today because of the excessive attachment to the sensual pleasures, the strivers following the Disicipline of Knowledge are rare indeed. So the Discipline of Devotion is very useful for them. Thus here the description of devotion is proper and reasonable.

Remedy:—By having affinity with the Lord and depending on Him, utterance of His name, loud chanting, meditation and adoration etc., are the easy means to develop devotion to Him.

'Viviktadeśasevitvam'—A lonely and holy place, free from hustle and bustle and disturbances, is suitable for meditation, adoration, study of sacred books and other spiritual practices. So it is proper for a striver to carry on his spiritual practice for God-Realization in a lonely woodland or temple etc. But if he is unable to find such a lonely and holy place, he need not lose heart in the least. He should realize that he (Spirit) is different from the body (Matter). Even in a lonely woodland or temple or the bank of the Ganges, if he identifies himself with the body, it means that he identifies himself with the world and, so there is not

much utility of the lonely place.

The real loneliness is that state in which the striver beholds nothing else besides the Lord or the self and he realizes that he has no identity with the body, mind and senses etc., because they are the evolutes of Matter, while the self (Spirit) transcends Matter (Nature).

'Aratirjanasaṁsadi'—A striver should have no inclination to worldly affairs. If anybody wants to discuss spiritual subjects, the desire to meet him is not, 'Aratirjan-saṁsadi.' The company of men attached to worldly enjoyments is an obstacle to spiritual life while the company of saints, exalted souls and strivers for God-Realization is helpful to spiritual practice. So the former, not the latter, should be disliked and discarded, the latter is indispensable for spiritual progress. It has been said— A man should not keep company being attached to it, but if detachment is not possible, he should keep company of noble persons because their company is a good remedy for attachment. By their company a striver develops detachment.

अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।
एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥ ११ ॥

adhyātmajñānanityatvaṁ tattvajñānārthadarśanam
etajjñānamiti proktamajñānaṁ yadato'nyathā

Constancy in the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, in seeing God as the object of true knowledge— this is declared to be knowledge, and what is contrary to it is ignorance. 11

Comment:

'Adhyātmajñānanityatvam'— All scriptures direct towards God. With this point in view a striver should dwell upon God to the best of his understanding. From arguments and counter arguments it is proved that God exists at all times while the world does not exist at any time. Even now it is decaying. The Self or the Supreme Spirit is eternal and imperishable while the world is transitory, perishable and is subject to modifications. The world actually has no existence of its own besides the Lord. The world appears to exist in the light of the Self or God. Thus to dwell upon the negation of the independent existence of the world and ever existence of God is 'Adhyātmajñ-ānanityatvam'.

Remedy:—Study of the sacred texts, listening to the divine discourses and questioning constitute the remedy.

'Tattvajñānārthadarśanam'— 'Tattvajñāna' means God. Constantly beholding Him pervading everywhere is 'seeing God as the object of true' knowledge. A striver should behold nothing else besides the Lord because He pervades everywhere, every time, every person, thing, incident or circumstance. To have such a constant perception is 'Tattvajñānārthadarśanam'.

'Etajjñānamiti proktamajñānaṁ yadato'nyathā'—The twenty virtues mentioned from 'Amānitvam' (Absence of pride) in the seventh verse to 'Tattvajñā-nārthadarśanam' (Beholding the Lord) in this verse are all conducive to God-Realization by wiping out a striver's identification with the body. So they have been named (true) knowledge. The contrary to these virtues are— pride, hypocrisy and violence etc. Such demoniac propensities are conducive to disinclination for God- Realization as well as to identification of the self with the body. So they are named ignorance.

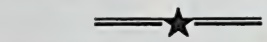
An Important Fact

If a striver by developing an acute

discrimination, can renounce his assumed affinity with the body, all these virtues are naturally revealed in him. Then he need not inculcate separate virtues in him. A striver should know the distinction between the real (Spirit) and the unreal (body). By knowing this distinction, his assumed affinity with the body is renounced. Secondly he should have the only aim for God-Realization.

A man has his assumed affinity with the body. Only by having this belief, his spiritual practice begins. The aim for God-Realization arouses discrimination which leads to dispassion. The Lord has described these twenty virtues to strengthen discrimination and dispassion. With this aim the evils are rooted out, whether a striver realizes it or not. As leaves on the branches of a tree, even when it is rooted out, remain green for a few days, the evils of a striver are rooted out as soon as he fixes his goal to realize God. In the beginning a striver does not realize this fact because evils appear in him. But gradually he realizes that he is free from all those evils.

During spiritual practice a striver some times feels the presence of evils in him. Actually at that time the evils make their exit. During the spiritual practice, if the number of evil propensities increases, it means that they are making their entrance. But if they are decreasing, it means that they are making their exit and so they will perish altogether. Under such circumstances a striver should not lose heart, he should be whole heartedly engaged in the spiritual practice. By doing so all his evils totally perish.



Link:–The Lord in the next verse describes that Knowable Who ought to be known.

ज्ञेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वामृतमश्नुते ।
अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते ॥ १२ ॥

jñeyaṁ yattatpravakṣyāmi yajjñātvāmṛtamaśnute
anādimatparaṁ brahma na sattannāsaducyate.*

I shall describe that which is to be known and by knowing which one attains immortality. It is the supreme Brahma Who is beginningless and Who is said to be neither existent nor non-existent. 12

Comment:

'Jñeyaṁ yattatpravakṣyāmi'—The Lord promises that He will describe that Brahma or God for Whose realization this human body has been bestowed and Who has been described in the scriptures.

By the term 'Jñeyam' He means to say that having known all the other subjects, sciences and arts of the world something else remains to be known. Moreover the worldly knowledge can't free one from the cycle of birth and death. But by knowing God nothing else remains to be known and the cycle of birth and death also comes to an end. Therefore in the world there is nothing worth knowing except God.

'Yajjñātvāmṛtamaśnute'— By knowing God one attains immortality and then nothing remains to be known, to be done and to be acquired.

In fact a man (self) is immortal but by assuming his identity with the body, he regards the death and birth of the body as his own. By knowing the Lord, this error is rectified and he realizes the self or his immortality.

'Anādimat'—The entire universe emanates from the Lord, remains established in Him and merges in Him while He remains the same. So He is called beginningless.

* In this verse the Lord by the terms 'Pravakṣyāmi' made a promise to describe that which is to be known; by 'Amṛtamaśnute' the result of that knowledge, by 'Anādimat', its mark, by 'Parama Brahma' its (His) name and by 'Na sattannāsaducyate' its (His) description have been given.

'Paraṁ brahma'—Prakṛti (Matter) as well as the Veda is called Brahma but 'Parama Brahma' is the Absolute, formless Brahma or God Who is all-pervading and ever remains the same. None is superior to Him in pervasiveness, purity and eternity. He is called 'Parama Brahma'.

'Na sattannāsaducyate'—God can not be called either existent or non-existent. He can't be called existent because something can be existent in relativity with something else which is non-existent. The term day is used only in relativity with the night. But if there is no night, the day can't be called the day. He can't be called non-existent because He surely exists. The fact is that words can't describe the real character of God either by the positive or the negative method. As the sun is different from both the night and the day, so is God different from both the existent (Sat) and the non-existent (Asat). 'Sat' or 'Asat' is determined through intellect. This is 'Sat' and this is 'Asat'— this is in the realm of the world which is the subject of mind, speech and intellect. But He is beyond the ken not only of speech but also of mind and intellect. So He can't be called either existent (being) or non-existent (non-being).

Link:–In the preceding verse Lord Kṛṣṇa described the attributeless-formless Brahma, the Absolute Who is worth knowing by saying that He is neither existent nor non-existent. In the next verse He describes the reality of what is worth knowing (Jñeya) viz., God as formless and endowed with attributes.

सर्वतःपाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।
सर्वतःश्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥ १३ ॥

sarvataḥpāṇipādaṁ tatsarvato'kṣiśiromukham
sarvataḥśrutimalloke sarvamāvṛtya tiṣṭhati

With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes and hands and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere He stands pervading all. 13

Comment:

'Sarvataḥpāṇipādaṁ tat'—As there are various scripts in ink and various ornaments in gold, the Lord has His hands and feets everywhere. Therefore He accepts all offerings from all quarters offered to Him physically or mentally. Moreover His hands are ever ready to protect the devotees from all the dangers everywhere. He has his feet everywhere and so he accepts the sandal paste, flowers and prostrations etc., offered by the devotees according to their feelings. If thousands and lacs of devotees adore the Lord's feet separately at a time, the Lord's feet are present then and there according to the sentiments of devotees.

'Sarvato'kṣiśiromukham'— Wherever devotees show lamp to God and offer homage to Him with kindled lamps, there are God's eyes. He has eyes everywhere. It means that no activities are hidden from Him. He beholds the devotees wherever they perform actions such as dance, meditation, prayer and various spiritual practices. It means that he who beholds the Lord present everywhere, He is never out of his sight (Gītā 6/30).

He has His head everywhere and therefore the sandal paste and flowers etc., offered to Him as a mark of reverence reach His head. Having His mouth everywhere He accepts the articles of food offered by His devotees everywhere (Gītā 9/26).

'Sarvataḥśrutimat' —The Lord hears the loud, slow and silent (mental) prayer of His devotees.

The Lord unlike men has all His limbs everywhere. It means he can hear, speak or accept the articles offered with His eyes.

Similarly He can perform all the actions with any one of his sense-organs. He has all the sense-organs in each of the smallest limbs.

By this statement that He has His limbs everywhere, He means to say that He pervades all the time, all the places, persons, incidents and circumstances etc. So He is not away from any one, He is close at hand for everyone. Saints have also declared the same.

As a man leading a mundane life beholds the universe everywhere, a devout devotee beholds the Lord pervading everywhere.

'Loke sarvamāvṛtya tiṣṭhati'—The Lord stands pervading the infinite universes because in the forty-second verse of the tenth chapter also He declares that He stands holding the entire universe with a single fragment of His.

Link:–Describing the Lord as formless and endowed with attributes in the preceding verse, in the next three verses there is description of His singularity (transcendent character), all-pervasiveness and omnipotence.

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।
असक्तं सर्वभृच्चैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च ॥ १४ ॥

sarvendriyaguṇābhāsaṁ sarvendriyavivarjitam
asaktaṁ sarvabhṛccaiva nirguṇaṁ guṇabhoktṛ ca

He (God) though devoid of all senses is the perceiver of all sense-objects, unattached yet sustains all, devoid of Guṇas (Attributes) (Qualities) yet enjoys them. 14

Comment:

'Sarvendriyaguṇābhāsaṁ sarvendriyavivarjitam'—There is preexistence of God; then there is His power Prakṛti (Matter). The evolute of Matter is Mahattatva (Cosmic intelligence), the evolute of cosmic intelligence is cosmic ego, the evolutes of ego are five gross elements, the evolutes of five gross elements are mind and ten senses, the evolutes of ten senses are five objects of senses — all these are the evolutes of cosmic Nature. But God transcends Prakṛti and its evolutes whether He is attributeless or endowed with attributes, whether He is formless or with form. He transcends Prakṛti even when He incarnates. In that case He manifests Himself keeping Prakṛti under His control.

How can God be bound by Guṇas (Modes) (Attributes) when even the embodied soul by attaining God transcends Guṇas? He is ever transcendent in character. He has no hands, feet, eyes etc., like other living beings but He is capable of perceiving the objects of senses.* He listens to the call of His devotees even without ears, embraces His devotees without skin, beholds beings without eyes, tastes the articles of food offered by His devotees without tongue, runs to help His devotees without feet and so on.

'Asaktaṁ sarvabhṛccaiva'—God loves all beings without having attachment for them. Unlike worldly parents who support their family out of attachment, He supports and nourishes all the beings throughout the entire universe either on the earth or in the ocean or in ether or in heaven in a better way without any attachment and provides necessities to them: Being their disinterested friend He purifies all of them, destroying their virtues and sins through favourable and unfavourable circumstances.

'Nirguṇaṁ guṇabhoktṛ ca'—Though God is devoid of Guṇas, yet He enjoys

* He (God) grasps and rapidly moves without hands and feet; He sees without eyes and hears without ears.
(Mānasa 1/118/3-4)

them. It means that the Lord is pleased seeing all the actions performed by His devotees in the same way as parents are pleased seeing the activities of their child, and thus He is the enjoyer.

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च।
सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत्॥ १५॥

bahirantaśca bhūtānāmacaraṁ carameva ca
sūkṣmatvāttadavijñeyaṁ dūrasthaṁ cāntike ca tat

He exists without and within all beings and constitutes the moving and also the unmoving creation; because of His subtlety He is incomprehensible. He is close at hand and stands afar too. 15

Comment:

[In the six verses from the twelfth to the seventeenth there is the description of the Knowable. Out of those six verses this is the fourth verse which also includes the idea of the preceding three verses and the next two verses. Therefore this verse contains the gist of this topic of the Knowable].

'Bahirantaśca bhūtānāmacaraṁ carameva ca'—In a block of ice immersed in the sea there is water within and without and there is nothing else besides water. Similarly all the moving and unmoving beings are pervaded, both inside and outside by God. It means that the entire moving and unmoving creation is nothing else besides God. The same thing has been described by the Lord from the angle of the realized soul as, 'Vāsudevaḥ sarvam' and from His angle He is describing 'Sadasaccāham.' Thus the experience of God and realized souls is the same.

'Dūrasthaṁ cāntike ca tat'—A thing can be near or far from three view-points—space, time and thing. God is nearest as well as farthest from all the three view-points. He pervades everywhere, close at hand and afar too *; He existed in the past, exists now and will exist in future; He existed before the things came into existence, He will exist when the things perish and He exists now in the form of things. Though the Lord is the nearest, yet He is far away from those who hanker after worldly pleasures and prosperity. But He is the nearest for those who have an inclination for Him. So a striver renouncing the desire for pleasures and prosperity should arouse a yearning only for God-Realization. By doing so he will realize his eternal union with God.

'Sūkṣmatvāttadavijñeyam'— God being subtle is beyond the ken of senses and mind. He cannot be known through senses and mind by people. Now the question arises that, when he can't be known, he must be naught. But He is not a naught. As the molecules of water existing in the sky are not seen but they are seen in the form of rain or hail, God being subtler than the molecules of water is incomprehensible by senses, mind and intellect etc.

The people don't know God because of their ignorance. As an illiterate person can't read the word 'Gītā', but a learned person in Saṁskṛta can read the word and know its contents, one who is well versed in the Gītā, all deep thoughts of the Gītā come to his mind. Similarly an ignorant person can't know God but one who has known Him in reality, beholds nothing else besides Him.

* Water is far from the earth, fire is far from water, air is far from fire, ether is far from air, cosmic intelligence is far from ether, Matter (Prakṛti) is far from cosmic intelligence and God (Paramātmā) is far from Matter. Thus God is the farthest. Though He is the farthest, yet He pervades all because He is their cause, all are born of Him.

Gross body is nearer than Matter (Prakṛti); subtle body is nearer than the gross body; causal body is nearer than the subtle body; ego is nearer than the causal body; God is nearer than ego. Thus God is the nearest.

God is worth-knowing (13/12,17). He can be known by the self, so he is called 'Jñeya'. but He can't be known by senses, mind and intellect, so He is called 'Avijñeya'. In order to know Him, a striver should believe that He pervades everywhere. By having this belief he will be able to behold Him everywhere because He really exists everywhere. This belief (assumption) is also a discipline. It has its own glory. It will lead to God-Realization.

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।
भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥ १६ ॥

avibhaktaṁ ca bhūteṣu vibhaktamiva ca sthitam
bhūtabhartṛ ca tajjñeyaṁ grasiṣṇu prabhaviṣṇu ca

He is undivided and yet He seems to be divided in all beings. He is the sustainer, the destroyer and creator of all beings. 16

Comment:

'Avibhaktaṁ ca bhūteṣu vibhaktamiva ca sthitam'—Actually there is one indivisible existence (God) existing in all diverse forms. Division is a mere appearance. Just as the space, though really one and indivisible, appears divided into innumerable forms; God though really undivided seems to be divided in all beings. In the twenty-seventh verse of this chapter also the Lord declares,"A seer beholds the Supreme Lord abiding equally in all perishable beings". Similarly in the twentieth verse of the eighteenth chapter also while describing the Sāttvika knowledge. He declares,"The knowledge by which the one Imperishable Being is seen in all existences is Sāttvika."

'Bhūtabhartṛ ca tajjñeyaṁ grasiṣṇu prabhaviṣṇu ca'—The Almighty God Who should be known (13/2) and Who is worth knowing (13/12) has been described as the sustainer (Lord Viṣṇu), the destroyer (Lord Śiva) and creator (Lord Brahmā). The same Lord as Brahmā with the predominance of 'Rajoguṇa' (activity) creates the universe, as Viṣṇu with the predominance of 'Sattvaguṇa' (thought) sustains it and as Śiva with the predominance of 'Tamoguṇa' (inertia) destroys it, yet He remains untainted by the Guṇas, having full control over them.

Link:–In the previous verse the Lord described that He who is worth knowing is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the entire universe. In the next verse there is the description that He is the light of all lights.

ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्यते ।
ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य विष्ठितम् ॥ १७ ॥

jyotiṣāmapi tajjyotistamasaḥ paramucyate
jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ jñānagamyaṁ hṛdi sarvasya viṣṭhitam

That supreme soul is said to be the light of all lights, entirely beyond darkness (ignorance). He is knowledge, the knowable, the goal of knowledge and is seated in the hearts of all. 17

Comment:

'Jyotiṣāmapi tajjyotiḥ'—The sun, the moon, the stars, fire and electricity are the illuminators (light) of the physical objects. The five sense-organs — ear, eye, skin, tongue and nose are the illuminators (light) of sound, sight

(colour), touch, taste and smell. The sense-organs can perceive the objects of sense, if the mind remains with them. So mind is the light (illuminator) of senses. Similarly intellect is the light of the mind as it guides the mind and distinguishes the real from the unreal. Self is the light of the intellect because if a man does not attach importance to the real and does not translate the reality into practice, there is not much utility of intellectual knowledge. The self is a fragment of the Lord and so He is the light (Illuminator) of the self. So He is the light of all lights but He is illuminated by none.

As an examinee can see other examinees who are sitting on the front benches but can't see those who are sitting at his back, ego and intellect etc., can perceive mind and senses etc., but can't perceive God Who sees all of them, Who is their illuminator and Who is not illuminated by any one. He equally illuminates the entire world, moving or unmoving (Śrīmadbhā. 10/113/55). In Him there is no trio of the illuminator, illumination and the illumined.

'Tamasaḥ paramucyate'—The Supreme Lord is entirely beyond darkness or ignorance. It means that He is totally untainted and detached. Senses, mind intellect and ego can be tainted by ignorance and knowledge but He is beyond the ken of ignorance in the same way as the sun is beyond the reach of darkness.

'Jñānam jñeyam jñānagamyam'—God is knowledge Himself, free from ignorance. All beings receive knowledge from Him. He is worth knowing (knowable) because nothing remains to be known after knowing him. The worldly knowledge is no doubt useful but it is not a must as it is not perfect in itself. After possessing it something else remains to be known. In fact it is only the Lord who is to be known certainly. Lord Kṛṣṇa in the fifteenth chapter declares, "I am worth knowing through the Vedas" (15/15) and "He who knows Me, knows all" (Gītā 15/19).

The virtues such as absence of pride, freedom from hypocrisy and non-violence etc., which have been described from the seventh verse to the eleventh verse of this chapter, have been declared to be (true) knowledge. By that knowledge, renouncing the unreal, the Lord can be known in reality. So the Lord has been called the goal of knowledge.

'Hṛdi sarvasya viṣṭhitam'—Though God pervades everywhere, He is particularly seated in the hearts.

How to realize the presence of God in the heart?

(1) The striver should realize the difference between the real and the unreal. He should know that there are different states such as wakefulness, sleep, and sound sleep; childhood, youth and old age but he himself remains the same. Pleasant and painful, favourable and unfavourable circumstances appear and disappear but he remains the same. There is contact with things, persons etc., and then there is separation from them but he remains the same. It means that he is different from all of them. By knowing this truth in reality he will realize the presence of God in his heart because he himself being a portion of the Lord has identity with Him.

(2) As a starving person becomes uneasy without food and a thirsty man without water, a striver should become uneasy for God-Realization. Then he will realize that He is seated in his heart. By this realization he will realize that God is all-pervading. This is real realization.

Link:—Having given a brief description of Kṣetra (Body), knowledge and the knowable (Worth knowing) from the first verse to the seventeenth verse, the Lord now concludes the topic in the next verse by pointing out the reward of knowing this topic.

इति क्षेत्रं तथा ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं चोक्तं समासतः ।
मद्भक्त एतद्विज्ञाय मद्भावायोपपद्यते ॥ १८ ॥

iti kṣetraṁ tathā jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ coktaṁ samāsataḥ
madbhakta etadvijñāya madbhāvāyopapadyate

Thus the Kṣetra (Body), knowledge and the object of knowledge (the knowable) have been briefly described; knowing this in reality My devotee attains Me. 18

Comment:

'Iti kṣetraṁ tathā jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ coktaṁ samāsataḥ'—The Kṣetra has been described in the fifth and sixth verses of this chapter; the twenty virtues which have been mentioned from the seventh verse to the eleventh verse have been declared knowledge and God Who is the object of knowledge, has been discussed from the twelfth verse to the seventeenth verse. Thus they have been briefly described by the Lord.

'Madbhakta etadvijñāya madbhāvāyopapadyate'—A devotee having known the Kṣetra, knowledge in the form of twenty virtues and the knowable (God) in reality attains the Lord or realizes his identity with Him. His assumed affinity with the Kṣetra (Body) is renounced by knowing the true nature of Kṣetra his individuality perishes by having a deep insight into knowledge consisting of the twenty virtues and he attains God viz., realizes his identity with Him by knowing the Knowable.

Link:–In the first and the second verses the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña were described in brief. The Lord reverts to the same topic and describes them in detail under the name of Prakṛti (Matter) and 'Puruṣa' (Spirit).

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्ध्यनादी उभावपि ।
विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसम्भवान् ॥ १९ ॥
कार्यकरणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते ।
पुरुषः सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते ॥ २० ॥

prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva viddhyanādī ubhāvapi
vikārāṁśca guṇāṁścaiva viddhi prakṛtisambhavān
kāryakaraṇakartṛtve hetuḥ prakṛtirucyate
puruṣaḥ sukhaduḥkhānāṁ bhoktṛtve heturucyate

Know that Prakṛti (Matter) and 'Puruṣa' (Spirit) are both without beginning and know also that all modifications and Guṇas (modes) are born of Prakṛti. Prakṛti is said to be the cause of all activities to be effected by the body and external and internal organs while Puruṣa is said to be the cause of the experience of pleasure and pain. 19-20

Comment:

[In the third verse Lord Kṛṣṇa ordered Arjuna to hear from Him what the Kṣetra is, what it is like, what its modifications are and whence is what. Out of these four, the first and the third were described in the fifth and the sixth verses respectively. The second will be described in the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh verses. Now while describing 'Whence is what' He says that all modifications and Guṇas are born of Prakṛti. Modifications were described in the sixth verse. Here in this verse He explains that Guṇas are born of Prakṛti—this is something new.

From the twelfth to eighteenth verses

there is the description of the knowable (God) while here from the nineteenth to the thirty-fourth verses there is description of 'Puruṣa' (Kṣetrajña). There all are mentioned to be within God while here all are mentioned to be within spirit. It means that essentially God and individual spirit are not two but only one.]

'Prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva viddhyanādī ubhāvapi'—The term 'Prakṛtim' stands for 'Primordial Matter', the cause of the entire Kṣetra (universe). Seven Matter cum modifications (Five gross elements, ego and cosmic intelligence) and sixteen modifications (ten senses, mind and five objects of senses)— all these are the evolutes of Matter and Matter is their cause.

The term 'Puruṣam' here stands for 'Kṣetrajña' which has been called the knower of the Kṣetra in the first verse of this chapter.

As the spirit being a portion of the Lord is without beginning, so is Matter, the Lord's potency. But the spirit and Matter are different in other aspects. Matter is endowed with attributes while the spirit is attributeless; Matter undergoes modifications, while spirit is free from modifications, Matter is the cause of the universe while the spirit is the cause of none. There is relationship of cause and effect in Matter while the spirit is free from this relationship.

As the expression 'Ubhāvapi' denotes that Prakṛti and Puruṣa both are different but beginningless. As both of them are beginningless the difference between them is also beginninglees.

As the terms 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajñaḥ' used in the first verse of this chapter stand for the individual body and the individual soul respectively. Here 'Prakṛti' stands for the 'Primordial Matter' and its evolutes while 'Puruṣam' stands for all 'Kṣetrajna' (Spirit).

The term 'Viddhi' in the second verse of this chapter was used to know the identity of the individual soul with the cosmic soul while here it that the two—'body' and 'spirit' or 'Prakṛti' (Primordial Matter) and 'Puruṣa' (spirit) are different. So the Lord orders Arjuna to understand it well that the two are quite different because a common man identifies the body with self.

'Vikārāṁśca guṇāṁścaiva viddhi prakṛtisambhavān'—Know the seven modifications—desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, body, life breath and firmness as well as the three Guṇas—Sattva, Rajạ and Tama to be born of Prakṛti. It means that Puruṣa is free from modifications and modes. In the seventh chapter the Lord mentioned the Guṇas to be evolved from Him while here He says that they are born of 'Prakṛti'. There because of the context of devotion the Lord mentioned them to be evolved from Him and He also explained that the wonderful illusion of His consisting of the three Guṇas can be crossed over by taking refuge in Him. But here is the context of knowledge, so the Guṇas are said to be born of Prakṛti. A striver should not assume his affinity with them. Thus he can get rid of them.

'Kāryakaraṇa.... prakṛtirucyate'—Ether, air, fire, water, earth and sound, touch, sight, taste, smell—these ten are Prakṛti's evolutes. Mind, intellect, ego, ear, skin, eye, tongue, (the sense of taste), nose, tongue (the organ of speech), hands, feet, generative organ and anus–these thirteen are included in the term 'Karaṇa' (instruments). Prakṛti alone is the cause of activities effected by all of them. Whatever is born, is called 'Kārya' (evolute) and the means by which the activities are performed is called 'Karaṇa' (instrument). These instruments are of three types—1. Organs of action 2. Sense-organs 3. Mind, intellect and ego. The organs of action are dull, the sense-organs are subtle and the mind, intellect and ego are very subtle. The organs of action and the sense-organs are external instruments and mind, intellect and ego are internal instruments. Actions are performed by organs of action while mind, intellect and ego control the organs of actions as well as sense-organs. It means that the sense-organs control the organs of action, the mind controls the sense-organs, intellect controls the mind and ego controls the intellect. The organs of action and the sense-organs don't function without mind, intellect and ego.

When the mind is connected with the sense-organs, then the sense-objects are perceived. The intellect decides which sense-objects are proper (sanctioned) and which are improper (prohibited). Ego controls the intellect.

Ego is of two kinds— 1. Ego as disposition and ego as a doer. The disposition of ego is not defective. But when a man (the self) identifies himself with this ego, being deluded he becomes the doer (agent) (Gītā 3/27).

Cosmic intelligence is the evolute of Prakṛti while ego is the evolute of intelligence, but a man by identifying himself with the ego becomes the master i.e., becomes a doer and an enjoyer (Gītā 13/21) but when he realizes the self, he is neither a doer nor an enjoyer (Gītā 13/31). The performance of these actions have been mentioned in the Gītā in several ways as "All actions are performed by Nature alone" (13/29); "All actions are performed by the modes of Nature"(3/27); "The modes are acting on the modes" (3/28); "There is no agent other than the modes" (14/19); "Senses move among the sense-objects" (5/9) etc. It means that all the actions performed by the external and internal instruments are performed by Prakṛti (Nature).

'Puruṣaḥ sukhaduḥkhānām.... heturucyate'—It is the Puruṣa that experiences pleasure and pain; Prakṛti being insentient can't experience pleasure or pain. The Puruṣa experiences them only by being pleased and displeased in favourable and unfavourable circumstances. If he is not pleased and displeased in favourable and unfavourable circumstances, he can never be an enjoyer of pleasure and pain.

In the fourth and the fifth verses of the seventh chapter the Lord has described His lower (insentient) and higher (sentient) natures. Both natures are portions of God. So they are naturally flowing towards God. The embodied soul; a fragment of God, has a natural inclination to Him. But being attracted by worldly enjoyments he identifies himself with the body. Thus he creates his own existence (Gītā 13/21). This is denoted as 'I am'. It consists of two portions— consciousness incarnate and inert. Pleasure and pain affect only the inert portion (Matter or body). But because of affinity with Matter he assumes pleasure and pain in the self. He feels 'I am happy', 'I am sad'. Thus a businessman regards the loss in business as his own loss. Similarly when the body suffers from fever, he thinks that he suffers from fever. If the self suffered once, it would continue suffering. It means that the self neither suffers loss nor suffers from fever.*

A man (spirit) wants to be emancipated from pleasure and pain because he assumed his identity with Matter, otherwise he himself being a portion of the Lord ever remains the same without undergoing any modifications in the form of pleasure and pain etc. It means that in this identification of the self with the body, the self has a desire for emancipation while the body has a desire for worldly enjoyments. So at last the sentient self is emancipated rather than the inert body.

All modifications are ever in the non-self not in the self. So to be the experiencer of pleasure and pain is not natural in the self. Being attached to the non-self, the embodied soul becomes the experiencer of pleasure and pain. It means that the pure self can never experience pleasure and pain. The pure self can't have two contrary states because it is always changeless, uniform and constant. There can be two states in the changing non-self. The self in spite of being uniform, having affinity with the changing non-self, thrusts upon itself changes and modifications which take place in the non-self. This is a common experience that we remain the same in pleasure and pain, we don't change. Pleasure and pain are different from each other but we ever remain uniform. But by assuming relationship with pleasure we become happy and by assuming relationship with pain we become sad. In reality we are neither happy nor sad.

* If a man realizes that he is the self, why should he suffer from the fever or desire or craving ?

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord mentioned the Puruṣa the cause of the experience of pleasure and pain. The question arises how the Puruṣa is the cause. The answer ensues.

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान्गुणान्।
कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु ॥ २१ ॥

puruṣaḥ prakṛtistho hi bhuṅkte prakṛtijānguṇān
kāraṇam guṇasaṅgo'sya sadasadyonijanmasu

The spirit seated in Matter enjoys the modes born of Prakṛti (Matter). Attachment to the modes is the cause of its birth in good and evil wombs. 21

Comment:

'Puruṣaḥ prakṛtistho* hi bhuṅkte prakṛtijānguṇān'—In fact the spirit is not seated in Matter (Body). But because of its identification with the body it assumes the body as 'I' and 'Mine' and is thus said to be seated in the body. Such a spirit experiences pleasure and pain in agreeable and disagreeable circumstances and enjoys the modes born of Matter.

As in a bus accident the bus driver is held responsible for the accident because of his attachment to the bus and so he is punished, it is because of the spirit's attachment to the body that it (the spirit) has to enjoy the fruit of action performed by the body. If it is not attached to the body and it sees all actions to be performed by Prakṛti alone (Gītā 13/29), it will have not to bear the fruit of actions.

'Kāraṇam guṇasaṅgo'sya sadasadyonijanmasu'—The good wombs are those in which there is an abundance of pleasure while bad ones are those that have an abundance of pain. The spirit takes birth in good and evil wombs because of its attachment to the modes born of Prakṛti.

The three modes—Sattva, Raja and Tama are born of Prakṛti. All the worldly objects and actions are born of the modes of Prakṛti. When the spirit attaches itself to these modes, it has to take birth in good and evil wombs. If it is not seated in the body and has no feeling of 'I'ness and 'Mine'ness in this body but remains established in the self, it will not be the enjoyer of pleasures and pains. It will become equanimous in pleasures and pains i.e., will become 'Svastha' (Gītā 14/24). It can establish its relationship with Nature or it can get established in the oversoul. It can't merge in the non-self because non-self (Matter) is perishable while the self is eternal. Both belong to two different classes. But its getting established in the oversoul is axiomatic as both are of the same class. Bondage is unnatural to it while identity with the oversoul is natural to it. Bondage is pinching to it while merger in the oversoul is pleasant to it.

In the ego of the self where there is the discriminative faculty to know the distinction between Prakṛti and Puruṣa, there only lies the ignorance to assume identity with Prakṛti. By assuming identity, this Puruṣa is called 'Prakṛtistha' (seated in Nature) and the sense of 'I' and 'mine' grows up. This is attachment to the modes of Prakṛti. This attachment to the modes binds him (Puruṣa) (Gītā 14/5) and therefore he meets with destiny according to the predominance of the modes of Nature (Gītā 14/18).

Link:–In the preceding three verses Prakṛti (Matter) and Puruṣa (Spirit) were described. In the next verse there is the description of Puruṣa in particular.

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* Here the term 'Prakṛtistha' (seated in the Matter) denotes 'Śarīrastha' (seated in the body). Here is the context of 'Puruṣa and Prakṛti'. So the Puruṣa is said to be seated in Prakṛti. In fact the spirit is not seated in the body, but by not realizing its situation in the self, it assumes its identification with the body.

उपद्रष्टानुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः ।
परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन्पुरुषः परः ॥ २२ ॥

upadraṣṭānumantā ca bhartā bhoktā maheśvaraḥ
paramātmeti cāpyukto dehe'sminpuruṣaḥ paraḥ

The soul having relationship with the body is called 'witness', because he gives consent, he is called 'permitter'; as he assumes that he sustains the body, he is called 'sustainer'; as he experiences pleasure and pain, he is called 'experiencer'; being the master of the body he is 'Great Lord'. Really speaking this Puruṣa by his own nature is Superme Soul. In spite of his residence in the body; he is untainted and unattached. 22

Comment:

'Upadraṣṭānumantā ca bhartā bhoktā maheśvaraḥ'—The Puruṣa (spirit) is eternal, all-pervading, immovable, constant and everlasting (Gītā 2/24). As the Puruṣa observes the body, the evolute of Prakṛti, He becomes a witness.

He is the Permitter because He gives advice and permission in the performance of actions.

He by identifying himself with the individual body sustains the body by providing food, water and other necessities and protects it from cold and heat etc. So He is the sustainer.

By identifying Himself with the body He undergoes all sorts of experiences. He experiences pleasure and pain in favourable and unfavourable circumstances. So He is the Experiencer.

He regards Himself as the Lord of the body, senses, mind, intellect, wealth and property etc. So He is called the Great Lord.

'Paramātmeti cāpyukto dehe'sminpuruṣaḥ paraḥ'—The Spirit dwelling in this body is really the same which has been termed as the 'Supreme Soul' in the scriptures. In spite of its residence in the body, it has no affinity with it. Though it dwells in the body, it neither acts nor is tainted (13/31).

In this verse the Spirit dwelling in the body has been called by different names as a man is called by different names (such as father, uncle, brother and grandfather etc.) according to the relationship, though it is the same.

Link:–Having described 'Prakṛti' and 'Puruṣa' from the nineteenth verse to the twenty-second verse, the Lord in the next verse declares the reward of knowing the two in reality.

य एवं वेत्ति पुरुषं प्रकृतिं च गुणैः सह ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि न स भूयोऽभिजायते ॥ २३ ॥

ya evaṁ vetti puruṣaṁ prakṛtiṁ ca guṇaiḥ saha
sarvathā vartamāno'pi na sa bhūyo'bhijāyate

He who thus knows Puruṣa (Spirit) and Prakṛti Nature) together with the modes, though he acts in everyway (whatever state of life he may be in) he is not born again. 23

Comment:

'Ya evaṁ vetti puruṣaṁ prakṛtiṁ ca guṇaiḥ saha sarvathā vartamāno'pi na sa bhūyo'bhijāyate'—Here the term 'Evam' (thus) denotes that the Spirit is different from the body. He who knows the difference in reality, while performing his duty according to his caste, creed, stage of life and

circumstances etc., is not reborn. He knows that Prakṛti with its evolutes, modifications and instruments etc., which appears in the form of the universe is different form the self. So he is not born again because attachment to the modes of nature is the cause of birth (Gītā 13/21).

Here the expression 'Sarvathā vartamāno'pi' (acts in anyway) does not involve forbidden actions because he who knows the Prakṛti with its modes different from the self, can have no desire to gain the unreal. When he has no desire, forbidden actions can't be performed by him because desire is the only cause of forbidden actions (Gītā 3/37).

The Lord exhorts a striver to know the self in reality that there is no action in the self. So he can be neither an agent nor an experiencer. When he realizes that he is not an agent (doer), his pride of doership comes to an end and so he has no desire for the fruit of actions which are naturally performed by him according to the ordinance of the scriptures. Having transcended the Guṇas (Modes of nature) he is not born again.

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord explained that the true knowledge of Prakṛti and Puruṣa is the cause of being free from rebirth. Now curiosity arises whether there is any other means also to be free from rebirth i.e., to attain salvation. So the Lord mentions four means in the next two verses.

ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मानमात्मना ।
अन्ये सांख्येन योगेन कर्मयोगेन चापरे ॥ २४ ॥

dhyānenātmani paśyanti kecidātmānamātmanā
anye sāṅkhyena yogena karmayogena cāpare

Some perceive the self in the self by the self by meditation; others by the discipline of knowledge and still others by the discipline of action. 24

Comment:

'Dhyānenātmani paśyanti kecidātmānamātmanā'—The strivers by meditation on the Supreme Soul, Who is formless and attributeless as well as endowed with attributes and form etc., as described in the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth verses of the fifth chapter, from the tenth to the twenty-eighth verses of the sixth chapter and from the eighth to the fourteenth verses of the eighth chapter, according to their faith and taste, realize the self or God.

As by the knowledge of the distinction between Prakṛti and Puruṣa, one's affinity with Prakṛti is cut asunder, so is this affinity cut asunder by meditation. No meditation is possible when the mind is either in the deluded state or in the volatile state. Meditation begins in the non-volatile state. When the mind is concentrated on the self, that is the state of trance in which there is no thought of the world, body or any inclination etc. Then the Dhyānayogī by perceiving the self in the self by the self gets self-satisfied (Gītā (6/19-20).

'Anye sāṅkhyena yogena'—'Several strivers realize the self by the self through the Discipline of Knowledge as has been described from the eleventh to the thirtieth verses of the second chapter, from the thirty-third to the thirty-ninth verses of the fourth chapter, in the eighth and ninth verses as well as from the thirteenth to the twenty-sixth verses of the fifth chapter and in the fourth and fifth verses etc., of the twelfth chapter.

Here the Discipline of Knowledge stands for discrimination. The devotee following the Discipline of Knowledge discriminates between the real and the unreal. The real is eternal, all-pervading, unchanging, immovable, unmanifest and unthinkable

while the unreal is transitory, kaleidoscopic, movable and it always undergoes modifications. Thus a devotee following this discipline by discriminating the real from the unreal isolates himself from Prakṛti and its evolutes and realizes the self in the self by the self.

'Karmayogena cāpare'—Some strivers attain the Supreme through the Discipline of Action as has been mentioned from the forty-seventh to the fifty-third verses of the second chapter, from the seventh to the nineteenth verses of the third chapter, from the sixteenth to the thirty-second verses of the fourth chapter, in the sixth and seventh verses etc., of the fifth chapter. The devotee following the Discipline of Action performs all his duties as well as religious sacrifice, charity, penance and pilgrimage etc., for the welfare of others. By doing so his affinity with things, objects and persons etc., is renounced and he realizes the supreme.

A man has assumed his identification with the body. In order to do away with the assumption he should assume his identification with the Lord as he identified himself with the body. This identification with the Lord is not sensuous, it is transcendental. In knowing the oversoul through instruments, dependence on Matter subsists. Unless affinity with Prakṛti is renounced, he can't get himself established in the Supreme Soul. Therfore Self Realization is beyond instruments.

अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येभ्य उपासते ।
तेऽपि चातितरन्त्येव मृत्युं श्रुतिपरायणाः ॥ २५ ॥

anye tvevamajānantaḥ śrutvānyebhya upāsate
te'pi cātitarantyeva mṛtyuṁ śrutiparāyaṇāḥ

Others ignorant of this (Disciplines of Meditation, Knowledge and Action) hearing from others, worship; and they too go beyond death by their devotion to what they have heard. 25

Comment:

'Anye tvevamajānantaḥ śrutvānyebhya upāsate te'pi cātitarantyeva mṛtyuṁ śrutiparāyaṇāḥ'—The strivers, who have a keen desire but who can't understand in full any one of the Disciplines of Meditation or Knowledge or Action, by listening to the liberated souls, and by obeying them promptly realize the self. As a poor man receives money from rich people by carrying out their order, a devotee receives divine knowledge by obeying the great souls. But the difference is that the money is gained when the rich man offers it, but obedience to the great souls naturally leads a man to realize God Who is automatically attained because reception of the money depends on the rich man and his will but God-Realization does not depend on any one.

A man regards the body's death as his own by identifying himself with the body. Those who rely on the advice of the saints and great souls and act according to it, their assumed affinity with the body is renounced. So they go (cross) beyond death i.e., they become free from the assumption by which they regarded the death of the body as their own death.

Such type of strivers, who rely on the advice of the great souls, are divided into three categories:–

(1) Those, who don't desire worldly enjoyments but have the only yearning for God-Realization; and the great man they depend on, is really exalted, attain God-Realization quickly.

(2) Those who have a desire for God-Realization but their mundane desires have not perished, by obeying the great souls, first will be free from the worldly desires and then will attain God.

(3) The strivers who have the only aim for God-Realization, even though the saints whom they obey, are not exalted souls, will realize God by His grace because He being omniscient knows all beings.

Actually the great souls transcend virtues and vices. If a striver cavils with them, he will behold the reflection of his own vices because they have no vices at all. So a striver need not have an eye on their actions and behaviour. He should draw spiritual inspiration from them. He should neither speak ill of them nor find fault with them otherwise he can't progress spiritually.

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord declared that those strivers who worship after hearing from others too go beyond death. Now the question arises what causes death. The Lord answers the question.

यावत्संजायते किंचित्सत्त्वं स्थावरजङ्गमम्।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगात्तद्विद्धि भरतर्षभ ॥ २६ ॥

yāvatsañjāyate kiñcitsattvaṁ sthāvarajaṅgamam
kṣetrakṣetrajñasaṁyogāttadviddhi bharatarṣabha

Whatever being is born, moving or unmoving, O best of the Bharatas (Arjuna), know it as emanated from the union of the field and knower of the field. 26

Comment:

'Yāvatsañjāyate kiñcitsattvaṁ sthāvarajaṅgamam kṣetrakṣetrajña-saṁyogāttadviddhi bharatarṣabha'—The unmoving beings such as trees, plants, creepers, grass and mountains etc., and moving beings such as human beings, gods, beasts, birds, insects and fishes etc., (living on the earth, in the water and the sky)—all are born of the union of Kṣetra (field) and Kṣetrajña (Knower of the field).

All the perishable objects which appear and disappear are included in 'Kṣetra' and the knower of this Kṣetra, ever remaining the same is Kṣetrajña. Affinity of this Kṣetrajña (Spirit) with Kṣetra (body) in the form of 'I'ness and 'Mineness' is the union of the spirit and the body. It is because of this assumed union that the spirit has to be born as moving and unmoving beings. This union has been called 'attachment to the modes of nature' in the twenty-first verse. It means that the eternal spirit by identifying itself with the kaleidoscopic Prakṛti and its evolutes, body etc., assumes itself as perishable.

[The birth of moving as well as unmoving beings has been denoted by the term 'Sañjāyate' (Is born) and the death will be denoted by the term 'Vinaśyatsu' (Perishing) in the next verse.]

'Tadviddhi bharatarṣabha'—Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna to know the fact that the contact (identification) of the spirit with the body is responsible for its rebirth. So if it does not assume its identification with the body, it will not be reborn.

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord explained that the identification of the spirit with the body leads the spirit to birth and death. Now the question arises what a man should do to be free from the wheel of birth and death. The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम्।
विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ २७ ॥

samaṁ sarveṣu bhūteṣu tiṣṭhantaṁ parameśvaram
vinaśyatsvavinaśyantaṁ yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati

He alone truly sees, who sees the Supreme Lord as imperishable and abiding equally in all perishable beings. 27

Comment:

'Samaṁ sarveṣu bhūteṣu'—It means that the Lord abides equally in all beings, moving or unmoving, of various sizes, colours and forms endowed with Sattva, Raja and Tama modes of nature.

The Lord in the second verse of this chapter declared, "Know Me as the Knower of the field (Kṣetrajña) in all fields (Kṣetras)." As the Lord identifying Himself with the spirit (Kṣetrajña) there said that He is the spirit in all the bodies, here also He points out that He abides equally in all beings.

'Tiṣṭhantam'—All beings undergo birth, life and dissolution; they are born in the cosmic dawn and dissolve in the cosmic night. They are born in various species. In other words they are always revolving. They don't remain constant even for a moment. But the Lord remains constant, uniform and the same in all these revolving beings.

'Parameśvaram'—God is the Supreme Lord of all beings who regard themselves as the Lord of some one or the other. He is the supreme Lord of the entire creation, sentient or insentient.

'Vinaśyatsvavinaśyantaṁ yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati'—He truly sees who sees the imperishable Supreme Lord the same without any modifications in all the perishable beings. It means that he who sees his own self identified with the body does not see truly while he who sees his self identified with the Lord sees truly.

In the second verse of this chapter the Lord declared, "It is the knowledge of Kṣetra (Prakṛti or Matter) and Kṣetrajña (Puruṣa or Spirit) which I regard as true knowledge." The same fact has been mentioned by the Lord here when He declares, "He alone truly sees, who sees the Supreme Lord as imperishable and abiding equally in all perishable beings." It means that in the union of Kṣetra (Matter) and Kṣetrajña (Spirit), Kṣetra ever undergoes modifications while Kṣetrajña ever remains the same. Similarly, all beings are born and then they perish but the Supreme Lord ever remains the same in all conditions and circumstances.

In the preceding (twenty-sixth) verse the Lord explained that whatever being is born, know it as emanated, from the union of Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña. Out of the two the Kṣetra ever undergoes modification while there is no modification at all in the Kṣetrajña. So a striver should realize this fact that the matter is constantly separating from the self. In this verse the Lord explains that a striver should realize his identity with the Supreme Lord Who is imperishable and Who abides equally in all perishable beings.

Link:—In the next verse the Lord declares the reward of the vision of the person who sees the Lord as imperishable and abiding equally in all beings.

समं पश्यन्हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम्।
न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम्॥ २८॥

samaṁ paśyanhi sarvatra samavasthitamīśvaram
na hinastyātmanātmānaṁ tato yāti parāṁ gatim

He who sees the Lord present, equally everywhere, does not destroy the self by the self, therefore he attains the Supreme Goal. 28

Comment:

'Samaṁ paśyanhi sarvatra samavasthitamīśvaram'—The person who beholds the Lord pervading the entire

universe, the sentient and the insentient, the moving and the unmoving beings i.e., he realizes his identity with Him, does not kill the self by the self i.e., does not follow the cycle of birth and death.

On the other hand the person who by identifying himself with the body regards its fitness, sickness, birth and death etc., as his own destroys the self by the self i.e., leads the self to the cycle of birth and death. It means that identity of the self with the body leads a person to a downfall and he has to follow the cycle of birth and death.

In fact nobody can kill himself as the self is indestructible. Moreover nobody wants to make himself non-existent. In fact to assume identity with the body is to commit suicide; to degrade himself and put himself in the cycle of birth and death.

'Tato yāti parām gatim'—The person (self) who by identifying himself with the body had to take birth in good and evil wombs, by realizing his identity with the Supreme Lord attains the Supreme Goal viz., the Supreme Lord Who is ever attained.

A Vital Fact

The Lord pervades everywhere, every time, every person, thing incident, circumstance or action equally. If he is hard to be attained, what is easy to be attained ? We can attain Him wherever we desire. In fact the seemingly existent world does not stay even for a moment. In the world there is nothing but change. It is a mass of change only. As when an electric fan moves speedily, it seems like a circle and its wings are not seen separate, similarly, the world seems to exist and the Lord Who really exists is not seen. Actually it is ony God who exists.

Did these bodies, which appear today, exist a hundred years ago ? Will they exist after a hundred years ? If the answer is 'No', it means that they don't exist at present also. The reason is that whatever does not exist at the beginning and the end, has no existence in the middle also. But God existed even before creation, will exist after dissolution and also exists now. Thus the world is actually non-existent while God exists. But the world seems to exist out of ignorance because of God who is existent.

If delusion perishes, the world will not appear to exist, only the Lord will be seen—'The Supreme is all' (Gītā 7/19). As in different ornaments made of gold there is nothing else besides gold, in the entire universe there is nothing else besides the Lord. The Lord existed in the past, He exists now and He will exist in future. The only aim of human life is to realize Him.

If a person instead of realizing God, gets entangled in the world, it is not human, it is beastly. This beastliness is to be renounced. So a striver should behold the imperishable Lord in all the perishable beings. If he beholds the perishable and not the imperishable, he commits suicide.

In the Mahābhārata also it is mentioned that he who in spite of being imperishable holds the spirit as perishable, which of the sins has not been committed by such a suicidal thief?

He who beholds the Lord pervading the entire universe equally, does not commit suicide but attains the Supreme Goal. But he who instead of beholding the Lord pervading the entire universe, beholds the universe and the body only, commits suicide and instead of attaining the Supreme Goal follows the cycle of birth and death. So a man should lift himself by himself, he should not degrade himself (Gītā 6/5).

As the face reflected in the looking glass, and the elephant seen in the dream are not real, this universe in spite of having no existence of its own, seems to exist. If a striver has a belief that the Lord exists and the universe only seems to exist, he will realize the fact in the course of time. When a striver is at Vṛndāvana, he has not to remember this fact or he has not to fix it in his mind by constant repetition, but he has not the least doubt about it. Similarly, if a striver assumes the existence of the Lord firmly, even though he may not see Him now, he will realize His existence because the unreal has no existence and the real can't remain concealed for a long time.

Link:—In the twenty-sixth verse the Lord talked about the union of Kṣetra (Matter) and Kṣetrajña (Spirit). There are two ways to be free from this union— realizing one's identity with the Lord and renouncing one's assumed affinity with Prakṛti (Body). The former has been discussed in the preceding two verses. Now He explains the latter in the next two verses.

प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः ।
यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ॥ २९ ॥

prakṛtyaiva ca karmāṇi kriyamāṇāni sarvaśaḥ
yaḥ paśyati tathātmānamakartāram sa paśyati

He who sees that all actions are performed only by Nature (Prakṛti) and that the self is not the doer, he verily sees. 29

Comment:

'Prakṛtyaiva ca karmāṇi kriyamāṇāni sarvaśaḥ'—In fact the self or the Absolute is equanimous, tranquil and devoid of modifications while His potency, Prakṛti is full of activities. Though Prakṛti is also said to be devoid of activity at the time of dissolution, yet on reflection it becomes clear that it starts its activity in subtle form towards the creation at that time also. That subtle activity is known as non-activity because in that state there is no activity of the creation of the universe. From the beginning of the creation to its middle, Prakṛti moves towards the creation, while after its middle it starts moving towards dissolution. If Prakṛti is said to be inactive during dissolution and final dissolution how can there be beginning, middle and end of dissolution and final dissolution? It means that activity goes on in subtle form even during dissolution. During the state of creation there is more activity while during the state of dissolution there is less activity.

The sun rises in the morning. Its light increases from morning to noon and decreases from noon to evening. From evening to midnight it grows darker while from midnight to morning darkness decreases. Actually the juncture of light and darkness is noon and midnight, not morning and evening. Thus the process of light and darkness goes on continuously. Similarly, Prakṛti undergoes activity during creation as well as dissolution, new creation as well as final dissolution.*

When a man (Spirit) identifies himself with active Prakṛti, the activities performed by the body seems to him to be his own activities.

'Yaḥ paśyati tathātmānama-kartāram sa paśyati'—All the actions such as eating, drinking, walking, moving, rising, sitting, sleeping, waking, meditating and trance etc., which go on in the gross, subtle and causal bodies, are performed by Prakṛti, not by the self because the self is actionless. He who intuits this reality, realizes that he himself is a non-doer.

Here the activities are said to be performed by Prakṛti while in other verses they are said to be performed by the modes of Prakṛti or by senses. These statements, though apparently seem different, are basically the same. Prakṛti is the cause of Guṇas and senses. Guṇas are the evolutes of Prakṛti and senses are the evolutes of Guṇas. So all the actions performed by Prakṛti or Guṇas (Modes of Prakṛti) or senses are performed by Prakṛti.

यदा भूतपृथग्भावमेकस्थमनुपश्यति ।
तत एव च विस्तारं ब्रह्म सम्पद्यते तदा ॥ ३० ॥

* The duration of the new creation is measured by the sun. But at the time of final dissolution when even the sun is merged, time is measured by the only means, the eternal, imperishable Lord.

yadā bhūtapṛthagbhāvamekasthamanupaśyati
tata eva ca vistāraṁ brahma sampadyate tadā

When he realizes that the manifold state of beings is centred in Prakṛti, and is an evolution from that Prakṛti alone, then he attains Brahma. 30

Comment:

[Prakṛti can be seen in two forms – actions and things (objects). In the twenty-ninth verse there is mention of how to renounce affinity with actions while in this verse there is description of how to renounce affinity with objects.]

'Yadā bhūtapṛthagbhāvamekasthamanupaśyati tata eva ca vistāraṁ brahma sampadyate tadā'—When a striver realizes the whole variety of beings whether born from the womb or egg and ground or sweat, with gross, subtle and causal bodies as centred in Prakṛti, he attains Brahma.

The bodies, names, shapes, forms, mental projections, qualities, modifications, birth, sustenance and, death of all beings of the three worlds are born of Prakṛti. The bodies of all beings evolve from Prakṛti, rest in Prakṛti and merge in it. He who realizes this fact attains Brahma i.e., he realizes the automatic self or the Absolute. Actually Brahma is already attained, it was only the affinity with Prakṛti which was an obstacle to this attainment. When he realizes that all beings rest in Prakṛti and are born of Prakṛti, he realizes the axiomatic self.

All the moving and unmoving bodies born of the earth rest on the earth undergoes changes and activities* on the earth and merge in the earth. It means that they are nothing else besides the earth. Similarly, all bodies of beings are born of Prakṛti, rest in it and merge in it. So they are nothing else besides Prakṛti. In the same way the self ever rests in the Supreme Soul. Though it undergoes modifications because of its assumed affinity with Prakṛti; yet really it is unattached. If a person realizes this fact, he attains Brahma.

Attachment and aversion are born out of affinity with Prakṛti. A man perceives virtues in others if he has attachment for them, but perceives vices out of aversion. So this veil of attachment and aversion conceals reality. But when a striver realizes that the so-called, his gross, subtle and causal bodies as well as the bodies of other beings emanate from Prakṛti, rest in it and merge in it and he realizes the negation of the three bodies in the self, the veil of attachment and aversion is removed and he realizes God Who is ever realized.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord describes the self to whom Brahma is attained which has been mentioned in the preceding verse and which in the twenty-second verse of this chapter has been described as detached from the body.

अनादित्वान्निर्गुणत्वात्परमात्मायमव्ययः ।
शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥ ३१ ॥

anāditvānnirguṇatvātparamātmāyamavyayaḥ
śarīrastho'pi kaunteya na karoti na lipyate

O Kaunteya, the self being without beginning and without attributes, is imperishable Paramātmā (Supreme Soul), though dwelling in the body, it neither acts nor is tainted. 31

* There are two kinds of activities—those which happen (occur) and those which are performed. The growth of a boy to youth and old age are the activities which happen while eating and drinking etc., are the activities which are performed. All these activities take place in bodies.

Comment:

'Anāditvānnirguṇatvātparamāt-māyamavyayaḥ'—As has been mentioned in the nineteenth verse also, the self is without beginning. But there Prakṛti has also been called beginningless. So what is the difference between the two? In response to this question the Lord explains that the self is without attributes (Guṇas) and their evolutes while Prakṛti is full of three Guṇas and modifications. The self being free from Guṇas and modifications is imperishable and untainted Supreme Soul.

'Śarīrastho'pi kaunteya na karoti na lipyate'—The self in spite of dwelling in the body neither acts nor is tainted, it remains detached from Prakṛti and is attributeless and imperishable. It is neither a doer nor an enjoyer. But when It identifies Itself with the body, It assumes that It is the doer as well as the enjoyer of pleasure and pain. But actually It is only the illuminator and spectator, It is never tainted because being a portion of the Lord. It ever rests in Him. The illuminator here means illumination incarnate. It is not illuminator in relation to the illumined.

Here the term 'Api' signifies that every embodied being from an ant to Lord Brahmā since eternity has been unattached and untainted by its own intrinsic nature. He had never any identity with the body as the two belong to two different classes. The body being an evolute of Prakṛti remains seated in Matter while the self being a fragment of God remains identical with the Lord. Howsoever he may seem to be mixedup with the body and feel identical with the body, his untaintedness is never affected. He ever remains untainted. He may not realize this fact, yet he undergoes no modifications. The self did nothing, does nothing, was neither contaminated nor gets contaminated.

Though the self seated in Prakṛti becomes a doer and an enjoyer yet in the twenty-first verse the Lord announced that the spirit seated in Prakṛti experiences pleasure and pain. While here He declares that the self (Spirit) in spite of dwelling in the body is neither a doer nor an experiencer. Actually Prakṛti and its evolute, body—both are one and the same. Actually the self has no connection either with the individual body or the collective Prakṛti. But it assumes itself as a doer and an experiencer by identifying itself with the body otherwise it is neither a doer nor an enjoyer.

Link:–How is the self dwelling in the body not tainted? The answer ensues:–

यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते ।
सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथात्मा नोपलिप्यते ॥ ३२ ॥

yathā sarvagataṁ saukṣmyādākāśaṁ nopalipyate
sarvatrāvasthito dehe tathātmā nopalipyate

As the all-pervading ether is not tainted by reason of its subtlety, so the self seated everywhere in the body, is not tainted. 32

Comment:

[In the previous verse the Lord explained by the expression 'Na karoti' (Neither acts) that the self is a non-doer while by the expression 'Na lipyate' (Nor is tainted) He explained that the self is not an experiencer. But here in this verse first He explains how the self is a non-experiencer while in the next verse He will explain how the self is a non-doer. Why has He changed the order? The answer is that a man performs actions in order to receive its fruit. So first he thinks of the reward and then performs actions. Thus the Lord asks a striver not to be an enjoyer. By renouncing the fruit of action the doership is automatically renounced.]

'Yathā sarvagataṁ saukṣam-yādākāśaṁ nopalipyate'—Ether equally pervading the air, fire, water and earth is not tainted by their qualities and modifications

because of its subtle character.

'Sarvatrāvasthito dehe tathātmā nopalipyate'—As ether equally pervading the gross elements such as air etc., is not tainted, so the self pervading all bodies is not tainted because it is eternal, omnipresent, immovable, constant, everlasting, unmanifest, unthinkable and immutable (Gītā 2/24-25) and the entire universe is pervaded by the imperishable self (Gītā 2/17).

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord explained that the self is not tainted i.e., the self is not an enjoyer. In the next verse He will explain how the self is not the doer.

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।
क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥ ३३ ॥

yathā prakāśayatyekaḥ kṛtsnaṁ lokamimaṁ raviḥ
kṣetraṁ kṣetrī tathā kṛtsnaṁ prakāśayati bhārata

O scion of the Bharata (Arjuna), as the one sun illumines the entire universe, so does the Lord of the Kṣetra (spirit) illumine the whole Kṣetra (field). 33

Comment:

'Yathā prakāśayatyekaḥ kṛtsnaṁ lokamimaṁ raviḥ'—One sun illumines the entire universe and all activities are performed in its light but it has no feeling of doership. A learned Brāhmaṇa studies the Vedas in the light of the sun while a hunter shoots animals in the same light but the light is not held responsible for the study of the Vedas or for hunting.

Here the term 'Loka' stands for the entire universe (fourteen worlds) because all objects (moon, stars, fire, jewels and herbs etc.) are illumined by the sun.

'Kṣetraṁ kṣetrī tathā kṛtsnaṁ prakāśayati bhārata'—Like the sun one Kṣetrī (Kṣetrajña or spirit) illumines the entire field (bodies) i.e., all actions are performed in the light of the spirit (self), yet the self neither performs the actions nor does it cause them to be performed.

The sun illumines the gross universe only i.e., the actions of the gross universe are performed in the light of the sun, while the self (spirit) illumines the gross, subtle and causal, all the three kinds of bodies, i.e., in its light all actions of the three kinds of bodies are performed.

As the sun has no pride of doership of illumining the entire universe nor is it tainted by the evil of partiality, the self also remains untainted, unattached, impartial and uniform without having pride of doership of infusing the light of life and activity into the entire universe. It is the self which is the base and illuminator of all actions, things and appearances etc., because nothing can exist without a base and nothing can be illumined without an illuminator.

Link:–Now the Lord winds up the topic of Kṣetra (Field, body) and Kṣetrajña (knower, self) by mentioning the reward of fully grasping the difference between the two.

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा ।
भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम् ॥ ३४ ॥

kṣetrakṣetrajñayorevamantaraṁ jñānacakṣuṣā
bhūtaprakṛtimokṣaṁ ca ye viduryānti te param

Those who with the eye of wisdom perceive the difference between Kṣetra (Field) and Kṣetrajña (the knower of the field) and also between Prakṛti along with its evolutes and the self attain the Supreme. 34

Comment:

[The Discipline of Knowledge begins with discrimination and ends in discrimination. Discrimination enables a man to renounce his affinity with Prakṛti and leads him to God-Realization. This fact is mentioned here.]

'Kṣetrakṣetrajñayorevamantaram jñānacakṣuṣā'—Here the expression 'Jñānacakṣuṣā' (Eye of wisdom) denotes the discrimination between the real and the unreal, Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña. The Kṣetra (Field) ever undergoes modifications but the Kṣetrajña (spirit) (the knower of the field) always remains the same and no modification is ever possible in it.

'Bhūtaprakṛtimokṣam ca ye viduryānti te param'—Discrimination enables a man to renounce his connection with Prakṛti and its evolutes. When a striver realizes that he (self) is different from Prakṛti, he attains God.

This God-Realization has been pointed out by the Lord by different expressions in the fourth verse of the twelfth chapter, in the eighteenth and twenty-third verses as well as in this verse of the thirteenth chapter.

In the Discipline of Knowledge, identification of the self with the body is the main obstacle to God-Realization. So in the first and the second verses the Lord discussed that the spirit (self) is different from the body (Kṣetra)(Field). Then He described in several ways that Kṣetrajña is different from Kṣetra. Here He is concluding the topic by declaring that those who perceive the difference between Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña properly, their affinity with Kṣetra is totally renounced.

Kṣetrajña has accepted its separateness from God by having a disinclination for Him while it has assumed its identity with Kṣetra by having an inclination to it. So the Lord declares both the facts—that it has its identity with God while it is totally distinct from Kṣetra. The Lord in the second verse of this chapter declared its identity with God while here He is explaining that Kṣetra has its identity with the world. Both the statements mean that Kṣetrajña has its identity with God.

In a pitch dark house no one dares to go after hearing that it is inhabited by scorpions, snakes and thieves etc., and is also haunted by ghosts and evil spirits. But when a courageous person enters the house with a lamp, all kinds of fears are removed because he finds nothing of that sort in the house. Similarly by having a disinclination for God Who pervades everywhere in the form of light, the world appears to exist to him and he is haunted by several kinds of fears. But when he realizes the reality, he comes to know that the world has no existence and all his fears are removed. Then he beholds only God Who pervades every person, thing and circumstance all the time. A lamp has to be brought in order to remove darkness but this light (God) is not to be brought from anywhere. Therefore a striver by renouncing totally his affinity with the world naturally realizes the Supreme.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविभागयोगो नाम त्रयोदशोऽध्यायः ॥१३॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde kṣetrakṣetrajñavibhāgayogo nāma trayodaśo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ, Tat, Sat, the names of the Lord, in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavadgītā, the knowledge of Brahma, the Supreme, the science of

Yoga and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, this is the thirteenth discourse designated:

"The Yoga of Discrimination between the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña."

In this chapter there is description of the distinction between Kṣetra (Field, Prakṛti) and Kṣetrajña (Knower of the field, spirit). When a striver realizes that the Kṣetra is different from the Kṣetrajña, he realizes his union with God. So the chapter has been entitled "Kṣetrakṣetrajñavibhāgayoga."

Words, letters and Uvāca (said) in the Thirteenth Chapter

(1) In this chapter in **'Atha trayodaśo'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are three words, in **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** there are two words, in verses there are four hundred and eight words and there are thirteen concluding words. Thus the total number of the words is four hundred and twenty-six.

(2) In this chapter in **'Atha trayodaśo'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are eight letters in **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** there are seven letters, in verses there are one thousand and eighty-eight letters and there are fifty-two concluding letters. Thus the total number of the letters is one thousand one hundred and fifty-five. In this chapter there are thirty-two letters in each verse.

(3) In this chapter there is one **'Uvāca'** (said)– **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'.**

Metres Used in the Thirteenth Chapter

In this chapter out of the thirty-four verses, in the first quarter of the first verse and the third quarter of the eighteenth verse 'ma-gaṇa' being used there is **'ma-vipulā'** metre; in the third quarter of the seventeenth verse and first quarter of the thirty-first verse 'ra-gaṇa' being used there is **'ra-vipulā'** metre; and in the first quarter of the twenty-third verses 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'na-vipulā'** metre. The remaining twenty-nine verses are possessed of the characteristics of right **'pathyāvaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

Śrī Hariḥ

FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

Introduction

At the end of the thirteenth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa said that he, who with the eye of wisdom perceives the difference between Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña, attains the Supreme. Now the question arises what that wisdom (Jñāna) is, what its value or glory is and how it is gained. The Lord starts the fourteenth chapter in order to answer these questions.

Connection with Prakṛti and its evolutes leads to bondage. The Lord in the thirteenth chapter explained how to renounce connection with Prakṛti. Now He starts the fourteenth chapter in order to explain the method of renouncing connection with its evolutes, the Guṇas. In the first-two verse He glorifies wisdom.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम्।
यज्ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः ॥१॥

śrībhagavānuvāca
paraṁ bhūyaḥ pravakṣyāmi jñānānāṁ jñānamuttamam
yajjñātvā munayaḥ sarve parāṁ siddhimito gatāḥ

The Blessed Lord said:

I shall again declare that supreme wisdom (knowledge), the best of all wisdom: by knowing which all sages have attained the highest perfection, being liberated from this mundane existence. 1

Comment:

'Paraṁ bhūyaḥ pravakṣyāmi jñānānāṁ jñānamuttamam'— The expression 'Bhūyaḥ pravakṣyāmi' denotes the Lord's declaration to explain the knowledge (discrimination) of Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña, Prakṛti (Matter) and Puruṣa (Spirit) as described in the eighteenth, twenty-third and thirty-fourth verses of the thirteenth chapter.

This wisdom (knowldege) is the supreme of all other knowledges – spiritual as well as mundane of arts, sciences, languages and scripts etc., because other knowledges lead to bondage while it leads to God-Realization. Here the Lord has used the two terms 'Uttama' and 'Para' which mean the same 'Supreme' or 'the best', The term 'Uttama' (best) denotes that this knowledge is the best as it is conducive to renouncement of connection with the body and the world while the term 'Para' (Supreme) denotes that this knowledge is conducive to God-Realization.

'Yajjñātvā munayaḥ sarve parāṁ siddhimito gatāḥ'—By knowing i.e., realizing that supreme wisdom all the great sages have attained God-Realization, being liberated from the mundane existence without any exception.

A Muni (Sage) is he who renounces his affinity with the body. The expression 'Parāṁ siddhim' denotes that all the mundane perfections including the Siddhis such as Aṇimā, Mahimā and Garimā etc., gained by the Yogīs are merely imperfections, because all of them lead to bondage, the cycle of birth and death and are obstacles to God-Realization. But the highest perfection is God-Realization because it frees a man from the cycle of birth and death.

इदं ज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यमागताः ।
सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ॥ २ ॥

idaṁ jñānamupāśritya mama sādharmyamāgatāḥ
sarge'pi nopajāyante pralaye na vyathanti ca

Those, who having acquired this wisdom, have entered into My Being, are not born again at the time of new creation, nor are they tormented at the time of final dissolution. 2

Comment:

'Idaṁ jñānamupāśritya'—In the preceding verse the term 'wisdom' was qualified by the adjectives supreme and best. Having acquired that wisdom a man's all doubts perish and he becomes an embodiment of wisdom.

'Mama sādharmyamāgatāḥ'—Having acquired that wisdom people enter into the Lord's Being i.e., they become free from doership and enjoyership like the Lord and realize that they are uniform and untainted like Him.

Wise men become uniform and untainted like the Lord but they can't create, sustain and destroy the universe like Him. Some one of the Yogīs by the practice of Yoga assimilates some exceptional power but that can't be on a par with the Lord's power which is natural. The power of Yogī is limited while that of the Lord is unlimited because He is omnipotent.

'Sarge'pi nopajāyante'—Here the term 'Api' (Also) denotes that the wise men are not born even at the time of creation when the different worlds come into existence and their lords are born. Those wisemen being free from the contact with the Guṇas are not born because it is contact with the Guṇas which determines one's birth.

'Pralaye na vyathanti ca'—At the time of final dissolution all beings are burnt to ashes or drowned by the flood. There is commotion and lamentation in the entire universe. But those wisemen are not tormented, they don't undergo any commotion or lamentation.

They are neither born at the time of new creation nor are tormented at the time of final dissolution because their contact with Prakṛti and its Guṇas which is the cause of birth, death and lamentation etc., is totally renounced.

Link:–Those who have acquired this wisdom, are not born again at the time of creation. But what about those who are born? The process of their emanation is described in the next verse.

मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम् ।
संभवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥ ३ ॥

mama yonirmahadbrahma tasmingarbhaṁ dadhāmyaham
saṁbhavaḥ sarvabhūtānāṁ tato bhavati bhārata

My primordial Matter (Prakṛti) known as the great Brahma, is the womb of all creatures; in that womb I place the seed of all life. The birth of all beings follows from this combination of Matter and Spirit. 3

Comment:

'Mama yonirmahadbrahma'— Here the primordial Matter (Prakṛti) has been called 'Mahad Brahma' because of the following factors:–

(1) The Lord is beyond the major and the minor, therefore He is the subtlest as well as the hugest. In the entire universe besides the Lord the hugest entity is the primordial Matter. So the primordial Matter (Mūla Prakṛti) has been called 'Mahad Brahma'.

(2) The Primordial Matter is called 'Mahad Brahma' because it is in between 'Mahat' (Mahattattva i.e., cosmic intelligence) and 'Brahma (God).

(3) In the preceding verse the terms 'Sarga' and 'Pralaya' respectively may be misinterpreted as Brahmā's day and his night. So 'Mahad Brahma' has been used to denote new creation (revelation of Brahmā) and final dissolution (dissolution of Brahmā). It means that the liberated soul's affinity is renounced with the primordial Matter. So they are neither born at the time of new creation nor are tormented at the time of dissolution.

The primordial Matter being the birth place of all beings, is called the womb. Infinite universes emanate from it and again merge in it. It is the cause of all the mundane powers and energies.

This primordial Matter is called 'Mama' (My) because it is the Lord's, it functions under His control only. Without His will it can't do anything through its own power. "With Me as the supervisor Prakṛti brings forth the whole creation" (Gītā 9/10). The Lord has used the expression 'Mama mahadbrahma' in order to explain that He is superior to Prakṛti.

The spirit in spite of being a portion of the Lord establishes its contact not only with Prakṛti but also its evolutes, the three Guṇas and their evolute, the body, having a disinclination for the Lord and is bound. So the Lord wants to emphasize the fact that the affinity of the spirit is with God Who is superior to His Prakṛti, because the spirit is His portion (Gītā 15/7). Therefore the spirit should not degrade itself by assuming its affinity with Prakṛti.

'Tasmingarbham dadhāmyaham'— Here the term 'Garbham' (seed) stands for totality of beings with their actions and past influences (latencies). The Lord does not place any new seed. The beings, who are following the cycle of birth and death since time immemorial, merge in Prakṛti at the time of final dissolution (Gītā 9/7). When their actions, having become mature, are inclined to bear fruit, the Lord at the time of new creation brings them into contact with Prakṛti (This contact was already there with the causal body). This contact is what He means by placing the seed.

'Saṁbhavaḥ sarvabhūtānaṁ tato bhavati bhārata'—After the Lord has placed the seed in Prakṛti, all beings with their gross and subtle bodies are reborn. The birth of beings at the time of creation is called the discharge of spirits (Visarga) which also goes by the name of primeval action (Karma). So it is the primeval action or primeval resolve of the Lord which brings forth the existence of beings (Gita 8/3).

[So long as the spirit (Embodied Soul) is not emancipated, it continues to have its affinity with Prakṛti and its portion, the causal body. So at the time of final dissolution, the spirit with the causal body merges in Prakṛti.]

Link:–In the preceding verse there was the description of the birth of all beings in totality. Now He describes the birth of all beings individually in the next verse.

सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः सम्भवन्ति याः ।
तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥ ४ ॥

sarvayoniṣu kaunteya mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ
tāsāṁ brahma mahadyoniraham bījapradaḥ pitā

Of all the bodies that take birth from different wombs, this Primordial Matter (Brahma or Prakṛti) is the Mother, while I am the seed-giving Father. 4

Comment:

'Sarvayoniṣu kaunteya mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ'—All beings born from womb such as men and animals etc., born from eggs such as birds and snakes etc., born from sweat such as louse etc., and sprouting forth from the ground such as plants and vegetation etc., having different shapes and different species including the gods, manes, devils, ghosts and other evil spirits etc., are included in the term 'Sarvayoniṣu mūrtayaḥ' (all the species).

A poet has rightly said that the turban, luck, speech, personal nature, shape, sound, thoughts and writing are not similar even of two persons. In eighty-four lac species so many beings since eternity have taken birth but their shapes are different from one another.

'Tāsām brahma mahadyoniraham bījapradaḥ pitā'—The primordial Matter is the Mother of all beings that take birth from different sources as mentioned above while God is the seed-giving father. The bodies of different colours and shapes are constituted of Matter while the spirit dwelling in them is a portion of the Lord. The Lord Himself declares, "Know Myself to be the Kṣetrjña (Spirit) in all the Kṣetras (Bodies)" (Gītā 13/2). This can be clarified by giving the illustration of a piece of cloth which is drenched. In the piece of cloth there are many minute holes. If it is drenched, water permeates all the holes equally. In this illustration the piece of cloth denotes Matter (Prakṛti), each of the holes denotes the body and the water which permeates the holes denotes God. It means that God permeates all the bodies and the entire universe.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord explains how the Guṇas (Modes of Nature) evolved from Prakṛti bind the spirit.

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसंभवाः ।
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥ ५ ॥

sattvaṁ rajastama iti guṇāḥ prakṛtisaṁbhavāḥ
nibadhnanti mahābāho dehe dehinamavyayam

Sattva, Raja and Tama–these Guṇas, born of Prakṛti, bind the imperishable spirit to the body, O mighty-armed. 5

Comment:

'Ṣattvaṁ rajastama iti guṇāḥ prakṛti saṁbhavāḥ'—The three Guṇas– Sattva, Raja and Tama are born of Prakṛti (Primordial Matter) which has been called 'Mahad Brahma' in the third and the fourth verses.

Here the term 'Iti' (These) denotes that these Guṇas. (Attributes or qualities) out of which infinite universes evolve and innumerable beings diverse in character are born, are neither more nor less than three in number.

'Nibadhnanti mahābāho dehe dehinamavyayam'—These three Guṇas bind the imperishable spirit to the body. The fact is that these Guṇas don't bind the spirit but it is the spirit which is bound by assuming its affinity with the Guṇas and their evolutes– objects, wealth, family and body etc. The spirit identifies itself with the body and is attached to other persons and wealth etc. So in spite of being imperishable, it regards the diseases and death of the body as its own and also the loss of other persons and wealth etc., as its own.

It is a great wonder that the spirit in spite of being imperishable, immovable and uniform, being over powered by Guṇas and their propensities, itself becomes Sāttvika, Rājasa and Tāmasa. Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsajī also declares in 'the Mānasa' that the spirit being a portion of the Lord is imperishable, sentient, pure and naturally a heap of bliss (7/117/1).

Actually the spirit is never bound by the Guṇas but when it assumes its affinity of 'I'ness, 'Mineness' and 'for me' with the body, it is bound and the Lord seems to be attained

with difficulty by it (Gītā 12/5). Due to body consciousness, bound by the three Guṇas it can't realize its immortality which is beyond the three Guṇas. This embodied soul in spite of being bound by the three Guṇas remains as it is. It means that it does not decay. So it is termed as 'Avyayam'.

With the sense of 'I' and 'mine' in the body these three Guṇas bind the soul in the body. In the absence of the sense of 'I' and 'mine' it is only the Lord.

An Important Fact

The spirit assumes its affinity with the body in two ways.

(i) I am the body — the sense of egoism.

(ii) The body is mine—the sense of mineness.

Thus the spirit by having the connection of egoism and the sense of mine is bound by the three Guṇas.

As a married person has relationship with all the members of the family of his wife and regards her necessity as his own, the spirit having assumed its affinity with the body, regards the latter's necessities as its own. Moreover in spite of being imperishable it is afraid of death and has a desire to live. If it renounces its affinity with the body, it will have no desire to live, nor will be afraid of death. Therefore so long as it has a desire to live and is afraid of death, it means that it is bound by the Guṇas.

The spirit is uniform and imperishable while the body being kaleidoscopic and perishable is decaying every moment. So if a striver does not attach importance to what is decaying and perishing every moment, he will realize the imperishable self which transcends the three Guṇas automatically.

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord explained that the three Guṇas bind the spirit to the body. Now in the next verse he explains the essential character of Sattva and the way in which it binds the spirit.

तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम्।
सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥ ६ ॥

tatra sattvaṁ nirmalatvātprakāśakamanāmayam
sukhasaṅgena badhnāti jñānasaṅgena cānagha

Of these, Sattva, being stainless is illuminating and flawless. It binds, O sinless one, by creating attachment to happiness and to knowledge. 6

Comment:

'Tatra sattvaṁ nirmalatvāt'—In the preceding verse the Lord described the three Guṇas. Out of these three, Sattva is stainless and so it is conducive to the knowledge of God-Realization.

'Prakāśakam'—Sattva being stainless is illuminating and free from morbidity of any kind. As in the light all the objects are clearly seen, with the predominance of Sattva Guṇa, all the propensities of Rajo Guṇa and Tamo Guṇa are clearly seen. Desire, anger, greed, pride and envy etc., which evolve from Rajoguṇa and Tamoguṇa, are clearly seen in that light. With the predominance of the quality of sattva the senses become animated and the mind works more promptly in understanding the mundane as well as the spiritual topics.

The quality of Sattva (Mode of Goodness) can be divided into two parts – (i) Pure Sattva (ii) Impure Sattva. The former aims at God-Realization while the latter aims at mundane pleasures and prosperity*.

With the predominance of the mode of pure Sattva, a striver having the aim of God-Realization, has a natural inclination for spiritual progress while a person possessing the mode of impure Sattva hankers after worldly pleasures and prosperity which lead him to bondage. Having this mode scientists make inventions but having no aim

* The impure Sattva is called so because it does not aim at God-Realization. This impure Sattva has 'Rājas' in it.

for God-Realization because of their pride of success and desire for praise and money etc., are bound.

'Anāmayam'—In fact the quality of Sattva is not totally flawless, but it is more flawless than either the Rajo Guṇa or the Tamo Guṇa. Either the Lord or the self is totally flawless but the Sattva Guṇa has been called flawless because it is conducive to God-Realization.

'Sukhasaṅgena badhnāti jñānasaṅgena cānagha'—Due to the predominance of Sattva, a striver experiences joy and peace. He is attached to the joy and peace and he does not want to be deprived of them. This attachment leads him to bondage.

During this period his faculty of knowledge develops. He comes to know several wonderful facts and topics never known before. So he is attached to this knowledge and he has a desire to maintain it for ever. This attachment is the cause of bondage. Moreover his pride of his superiority that he knows more than others also leads him to bondage. Thus he can't transcend the three Guṇas. This attachment is the quality of Raja which binds the striver (Gītā 13/21). If the striver is not attached to the joy and knowledge, he transcends the three Guṇas including the Sattva Guṇa and realizes the self.

The striver should not enjoy that joy and knowledge nor should he aim at them. He should think that they are conducive to the attainment of his goal. Moreover he has to attain that goal which is the illuminator of pleasure and knowledge. Knowledge and pleasure are mental projections during the preponderance of Sattva. They wax and wane, they come and go while the self remains uniform and constant. It knows no increase or decrease. Therefore a striver should remain quite unconcerned and indifferent to these modifications. He should not enjoy them. Thus he will not get entangled in pleasure and knowledge, the evolutes of Sattva. If he is not attached to them, he realizes God quickly. Even if he does not renounce this attachment, by having the aim of God-Realization, in the course of time he develops a disinclination for pleasure and knowledge and then he attains God.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord describes the characteristic of Rajoguṇa and shows how it binds the spirit.

रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम्।
तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम्॥ ७॥

rajo rāgātmakaṁ viddhi tṛṣṇāsaṅgasamudbhavam
tannibadhnāti kaunteya karmasaṅgena dehinam

Know Rajas to be of the nature of passion, the source of longing and attachment. It binds the spirit through attachment to actions, O son of Kuntī.7

Comment:

'Rajo rāgātmakaṁ viddhi'—This quality of Rajas manifests itself in the form of passion or attachment to persons, things and actions etc.

The Lord by the term 'Rāgātmakam' means to say that as in the ornaments made of gold there is nothing else besides gold, in Rajoguṇa there is nothing else besides attachment.

In the philosophy of sage Patañjali 'Rajoguṇa' has been manifested as 'Activity' (Action). But in the Gītā the Lord (in spite of accepting the activity as the secondary characteristic of Rajoguṇa) declares attachment as the main characteristic of Rajoguṇa.* Therefore the Lord exhorts Arjuna

* This is the singularity of the Gītā that without refuting a sect or an opinion, it expresses its opinion. In the Gītā on the one hand undertaking of an action is Rajoguṇa (14/12) while the action performed without attachment etc., is said to be Sāttvika (18/23). It means that actions don't lead to bondage, but it is attachment to them and the desire for their fruit which lead to bondage.

to perform actions renouncing attachment (2/48). Performance of actions without attachment leads a man to attain the Supreme (3/19). In the twenty-second verse of this chapter the Lord while giving the marks of him who has risen above the three Guṇas declares that he neither hates activity when present nor longs for it when absent. It means that such a soul performs actions without attachment. Thus it is attachment only which leads to bondage.

At the time of new creation the Lord's resolve of becoming many fold from one is translated into practice. In the Gītā it is called Karma (Action) (8/3). When curd is churned, butter and butter-milk are separated. Similarly at the time of creation with the Rajoguṇī resolve there is commotion in Prakṛti (Matter) and then Sattva Guṇa in the form of butter and Tamoguṇa in the form of butter-milk are separated. By the Sattva Guṇa inner sense (mind) and senses; by the Rajoguṇa, life breath and organs of action; and by Tamoguṇa gross objects and bodies etc., are created. Other things and objects are created by the three Guṇas. Thus the Lord creates the entire universe being totally free from attachment (Gītā 4/13).

'Tṛṣṇāsaṅgasamudbhavam'—'Tṛṣṇā' is the thirst or desire of hankering after the things etc., not yet acquired of maintaining them having acquired them. This desire leads to the attachment for those things and persons etc. This expression 'Tṛṣṇāsaṅga-samudbhavam' according to the grammar has a double meaning (1) It is the source of thirst (desire) and attachment. (2) It evolves from thirst and attachment. As a seed sprouts up into a tree and a tree produces several seeds, similarly Rajoguṇa enhances desire and attachment while desire and attachment enhance Rajoguṇa. It means that they nourish each other. Thus both the meanings are appropriate.

'Tannibadhnāti kaunteya karma-saṅgena dehinam'—The Rajoguṇa binds the spirit through attachment to actions. With the predominance of Rajoguṇa there is enhancement of desire and attachment which conduce a man to perform actions. When he starts those actions he is more and more entangled in their thought as well as the thought of new actions. Thus a man does not get an opportunity to attain salvation. He because of desire and attachment for actions is bound and follows the cycle of birth and death. So a striver should perform actions without having a desire for their fruit according to the circumstances available, but should not begin new actions for prosperity and pleasures.

Here the term 'Dehinam' (spirit) denotes that Rajoguṇa binds the spirit which assumes its affinity with the body through attachment to actions.

A man is also bound when he has a desire to enjoy the fruit of actions. Thus a man is bound by attachment to actions and the fruit of actions.

In order to be free from this attachment a striver should always think of the kaleidoscopic nature of all the persons, things, incidents and circumstances etc. All of them are decaying and dying every moment. Even the kings and emperors with all their luxuries such as riches, palaces and attendants etc., have met the same fate. He should think that he is going to meet the same fate. So he should not waste his energy, intellect and time by having attachment for actions and their fruit. This attachment will lead him to the cycle of birth and death and he will be deprived of

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A man free from attachment is not bound by actions (4/19). They don't lead the liberated souls to bondage (14/22). The Lord also performs actions at the time of the creation of the universe and also when He incarnates. But the actions don't bind Him because He remains unattached to them (9/9).

In the twenty-third, twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses of the eighteenth chapter the Lord has described three kinds of actions. Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika. Had all the actions been included in Rajoguṇa, they might have not been called Sāttvika and Tāmasika. It means that only attachment is Rajoguṇa.

the real attainment of human life. Therefore instead of performing new actions for prosperity and pleasures, he should perform his prescribed duty according to the available circumstances without having any attachment for it. Such thoughts conduce a striver to detachment from actions.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord describes the characteristic of Tamoguṇa (darkness attribute or the Principle of Inertia) and the way in which it binds the spirit.

तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम्।
प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥ ८ ॥

tamastvajñānajaṁ viddhi mohanaṁ sarvadehinām
pramādālasyanidrābhistannibadhnāti bhārata

But know Tāmasa(Mode of Darkness or Ignorance) to be born of ignorance, deluding all embodied beings. It binds the spirit, O Bhārata, through heedlessness, indolence and sleep. 8

Comment:

'Tamastvajñānajaṁ viddhi mohanaṁ sarvadehinām'— Here the term 'Tu' (But) has been used to denote that Tamoguṇa is far inferior to Sattvaguṇa and even Rajoguṇa.

It is born of ignorance or folly and it deludes the embodied beings i.e., those beings who regard the body as their self. It enshrouds discrimination and so they can't discriminate between the real and the unreal; and the proper and the improper. It spoils even Rājasika pleasures and prosperity. Then there is no question of the safety of Sāttvika happiness.

The Lord means to say that the human beings are deluded of Tamoguṇa but He has used the expression 'Sarvadehinām' (All embodied beings) to denote that the human beings who lack discrimination are like other deluded beings such as birds and beasts etc., that eat, drink, sleep and produce young, ones.

'Pramādālasyanidrābhistannibadhnāti bhārata'—This Tamoguṇa binds the embodied beings through heedlessness, indolence and sleep.

'Pramāda'—(Heedlessness) is of two kinds (1) The heedlessness by which one does not discharge one's duty which is conducive to one's own welfare as well as to the welfare of others. (2) The heedlessness by which one performs futile actions which are of no use either to him or to others. Futile actions can further be divided into two categories.

(i) Extravagance on smoking, drinking and movies etc.

(ii) Playing cards and backgammon etc., shooting birds and beasts etc., and destroying plants etc.

Indolence is also of two kinds—(1) In this state of indolence a man remains idle, sleeps more than is required and ever postpones the work. This indolence leads a man to bondage. (2) In the second kind of indolence a person feels drowsy after the day's hard mental and physcial work. That sort of sleep is inevitable. This indolence is not defective.

Sleep can also be divided into two parts—(1) Sleep which is necessary for a healthy body and a healthy mind. It is regulated and is helpful in the practice of Yoga (Gītā 6/17). (2) Unnecessary sleep–One sleeps too much. It is a stumbling block to the practice of Yoga and so it is to be neglected (Gītā 6/16).

Thus Tamoguṇa (Mode of Ignorance) binds a man through heedlessness, indolence and sleep i.e., they are stumbling blocks to his mundane and spiritual progress.

An Important fact

Sattva (Mode of Goodness), Raja (Mode of passion and Tama (Mode of ignorance)

bind a man (spirit). Out of the three Sattva binds by attachment to happiness and to knowledge, Raja binds by attachment to actions but in Tama there is no need of any sort of attachment, it automatically binds a man.

If a striver is not attached to happiness and is not proud of knowledge, his happiness and knowledge will lead him to the state which transcends the three Guṇas. Similarly actions and their fruit without attachment will lead to the attainment of the Supreme (Gītā 3/19).

The three Guṇas (Modes) are the evolutes of Prakṛti (Nature) and he (the self) is free from nature and its modes. But he is bound because of his contact with these modes. So if he realizes the fact, he is free from them.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord describes the natural function of the three Guṇas (Modes) before they bind the spirit.

सत्त्वं सुखे सञ्जयति रजः कर्मणि भारत।
ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे सञ्जयत्युत॥ ९॥

sattvaṁ sukhe sañjayati rajaḥ karmaṇi bhārata
jñānamāvṛtya tu tamaḥ pramāde sañjayatyuta

The mode of goodness drives (attaches) one to happiness, passion to action, O Bhārata, while ignorance, veiling knowledge, attaches one to heedlessness. 9

Comment:

'Sattvaṁ sukhe sañjayati'—A striver is attached to happiness and thus he is bound. Because of this attachment he does not make any further spiritual progress and transcend the three Guṇas.

In the sixth verse of this chapter the Lord declared that the mode of goodness binds by attachment to happiness and knowledge. But here He describes only attachment to happiness. It means that the pride of knowledge also provides happiness which binds the striver. So He describes only happiness.

'Rajaḥ karmaṇi bhārata'— As a child takes pleasure in moving its arms and legs etc., a man feels happy while performing actions. So he is attached to actions and this attachment overpowers him. He pays attention to the Lord's words 'You are not entitled to the fruit of action' (Gītā 2/47) but he does not pay attention to the fact that he should not be attached to actions. He goes through the Lord's declarations such as "Your right is to perform your duty; let your attachment not be to inaction." and "Action is said to be the means of the sage who wishes to attain to Yoga" (Gītā 6/3). So he thinks that he must perform actions. Thus by performing actions he is attached to them. So the Lord warns him that he should be aware of the attachment to actions which binds him. A striver should discharge his duty promptly by performing actions but should not get attached to them (Gītā 6/4).

'Jñānamāvṛtya tu tamaḥ pramāde sañjayatyuta' —The mode of ignorance covers a man's discrimination and he can't distinguish between the real and the unreal, the right and the wrong. So he is engaged in idle pursuits but does not discharge his duty promptly.

The two characteristics of the mode of goodness are–knowledge (discrimination) and illumination (light). The mode of ignorance by covering discrimination misleads a man to heedlessness and by covering light (purity of senses and mind) misleads him to indolence and sleep. So he can't know the reality.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord describes how these Guṇas (Modes) act one over the other.

रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत ।
रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥ १० ॥

rajastamaścābhibhūya sattvaṁ bhavati bhārata
rajaḥ sattvaṁ tamaścaiva tamaḥ sattvaṁ rajastathā

Goodness prevails, overpowering passion and ignorance, O Bhārata. Passion prevails, overpowering goodness and ignorance and even so ignorance prevails, overpowering goodness and passion. 10

Comment:

'Rajastamaścābhibhūya sattvaṁ bhavati bhārata'—Goodness prevails, overpowering passion and ignorance. This mode develops illumination, purity, dispassion, generosity and detachment etc., overpowering Rajoguṇa viz., greed, activity, disquietude and craving for worldly pleasures and prosperity etc., and Tamoguṇa viz., heedlessness, indolence unnecessary sleep and delusion etc.

'Rajaḥ sattvaṁ tamaścaiva'—Passion prevails overpowering goodness and ignorance viz., greed, activity, disquietude and craving for wordly pleasures and prosperity prevails over the propensities of Tamoguṇa and the quality of Sattva which are mentioned above.

'Tamaḥ sattvaṁ rajastathā' —The mode of ignorance viz., heedlessness, indolence, excessive sleep and delusion etc., overpower the traits of Sattvaguṇa and Rajoguṇa.

One of the modes prevails overpowering the other two modes and it binds a man. Here (From the sixth to the tenth verse) the Lord has reversed the order because here is the description how it binds a man, then how he is attached and finally how one of the modes prevails over the other two. This order is justified. The Lord in the second verse of this chapter explained that those who have renounced their connexion with Prakṛti are not born at the time of creation nor are they tormented at the time of dissolution. But those who are connected with Prakṛti, get bound (14/5). Now the question arises how they bind a man. So the Lord from the sixth to the eighth verse explained how the three kinds of modes bind a man (spirit). Then the question arises what they do before binding the spirit. In response to it the Lord explained that they drive him to happiness, to actions and to heedlessness (14/9). Again the question arises how they drive him. So the Lord answers that one of them prevails over the other two (14/10). Thus the order is justified.

Link:—When one of the modes prevails over the other two, what are the marks of that prepondering mode? The Lord first delineates the marks of the predominance of the mode of goodness.

सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन्प्रकाश उपजायते ।
ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत ॥ ११ ॥

sarvadvāreṣu dehe'sminprakāśa upajāyate
jñānaṁ yadā tadā vidyādvivṛddhaṁ sattvamityuta

When the gates of the body (senses and mind) are illumined by light (purity) and knowledge, then it may be known that Sattva (Goodness) is predominant. 11

Comment:

'Sarva dvāreṣu dehe'sminprakāśa upajāyate jñānam yadā'—When the mode of goodness prevails overpowering the modes of passion and ignorance, all the senses and the mind are illuminated. As in the light of the sun the objects are seen clearly, one perceives things in the right perspective. The mind thinks properly.

When the senses and the mind are cleansed, one can distinguish between the real and the unreal, the right and the wrong, the good and the bad and what ought to be done and what ought not to be done.

By using the term 'Dehe'smin' (In this body) the Lord wants to emphasize the importance of human birth. It is only in this birth that one can develop the mode of goodness i.e., purity and discrimination. The Lord has used the expression 'Sarva-dehinām' (Gītā 14/8) for all embodied beings who are bound by the mode of ignorance. It means that the modes of ignorance and passion develop in other bodies also but the mode of goodness can develop only in the human body. So a man by overpowering the modes of passion and ignorance should transcend even the mode of goodness in order to attain the goal of human life. The Lord by His grace has given us power and freedom in this human body to prevail over these three modes.

'Tadā vidyādvivṛddham sattvamityuta'—When a striver's mind is illumined and discrimination is aroused, he should know that the mode of goodness has prevailed overpowering the modes of passion and ignorance. So he should not feel proud of his achievement, regarding the discrimination and illumination as his own. He should regard them as the marks of the mode of goodness.

The expression 'Iti vidyāt' (Thus may be known) denotes that only a man can know that the modes, not the self, undergo modifications. But a man by assuming his identification with the three modes of nature assumes himself as Sāttvika (good), Rājasika (passionate) and Tāmasika (Ignorant). So by attaching importance to his discrimination he should regard himself free from all flaws and modifications.

These modes undergo modifications but he is the onlooker who observes all the modifications. If he himself had undergone changes, who might have observed the modifications?

With the predominance of the mode of goodness, the senses and mind become cleansed, discrimination is aroused, dispassion takes the place of attachment, quietude displaces disquietude and generosity displaces greed. All actions are performed as duty without the desire for their fruit (Gītā 18/9). The person possessing this mode does not attach importance to worldly pleasures and prosperity but only makes both ends meet. With the development of intellect and discrimination all the actions are performed very carefully and promptly and he can distinguish between the right and the wrong. So when there is the predominance of the mode of goodness, a striver should be particularly engaged in adoration and meditation etc., because even a little spiritual practice of that time is very useful.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord describes the marks when there is an increase in the mode of passion.

लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा ।
रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे भरतर्षभ ॥ १२ ॥

lobhaḥ pravṛttirārambhaḥ karmaṇāmaśamaḥ spṛhā
rajasyetāni jāyante vivṛddhe bharatarṣabha

Greed, activity, undertaking of actions with an interested motive, unrest and craving – these spring up Oh Best of the Bharatas, when there is an increase in the mode of passion. 12

Comment:

'Lobhaḥ'—Greed is the lust for multiplying wealth and possessions. But if the wealth increases through one's own profession, though one has no craving, it is not greed.

'Pravṛttiḥ'—The urge to undertake various form of activities is 'Pravṛtti'. The activity free from attachment and aversion is not harmful because even the great souls who have transcended the three modes of nature are engaged in activity (Gītā 14/22). But it is harmful if it is performed with attachment and a desire for its fruit.

'Ārambhaḥ karmaṇām'—These actions are undertaken in order to gain wealth, name, fame and praise etc. Performance of new actions for worldly pleasures and prosperity is the undertaking of actions viz., 'Ārambha' while one's profession or an activity according to circumstances or need of the hour is a 'Pravṛtti.'

The goal of human life is not worldy pleasure or prosperity but God-Realization. So in the Disciplines of Devotion and Knowledge emphasis has been laid on giving up all initiative for action (12/16,14/25). In the Discipline of Action, actions are performed without desires and self-centred projections (Gītā 4/19). Without actions the striver following the Discipline of Action can't attain equanimity (Gītā 6/3). So a striver should be engaged in actions according to the circumstances available without having any attachment. By doing so his urge for actions comes to an end. Thus the undertaking of actions turns into activity.

'Aśamaḥ'—Unrest or commotion in the mind is called 'Aśama'. Unfulfilled desires cause unrest. If desires are renounced; there is no restlessness.

'Spṛhā'—Desire for the bare necessities of life is 'Spṛhā. A striver should renounce this desire because nothing can be gained merely by desire. It is not an evil to be aware of hunger, thirst and cold but desire for getting food, water and cloth is an evil.

'Rajasyetāni jāyante vivṛddhe bharatarṣabha'—When there is an increase in the mode of passion, a striver should think that his life is running smoothly. Then the desire for more is mere stupidity. By thinking so he should do away with this mode and become indifferent to it.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord describes the symptoms when there is an increase in the mode of ignorance.

अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च।
तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन॥ १३॥

aprakāśo'pravṛttiśca pramādo moha eva ca
tamasyetāni jāyante vivṛddhe kurunandana

O Son of Kuru, when there is an increase in the mode of ignorance, unillumination, inactivity, heedlessness (negligence) and delussion are manifested. 13

Comment:

'Aprakāśaḥ'—When the mode of ignorance prevails overpowering the mode of goodness, the senses and mind are not pure and discrimination disappears. This is in contrast with 'Prakāśa.'

'Apravṛttiḥ'—When the mode of ignorance prevails overpowering the mode of passion, a person has no inclination to discharge even his obligatory duties. He wants to remain idle.

'Pramādaḥ'—It means neglect of

duties which are conducive to the mundane as well as the spiritual progress, and addiction to idle pursuits such as smoking, playing cards and gammon etc., and going to the movies etc.

'Mohaḥ' —When there is an increase in the mode of ignorance, delusion is aroused and discrimination is obscured and a man makes no endeavour to perform his duties to make material and spiritual progress.

'Eva ca' —This expression includes the frivolous pursuits such as excessive sleep and waste of time and money etc.

'Tamasyetāni jāyante vivṛddhe kurunandana' —These are the symptoms of an increase in the mode of ignorance. When there are non-illumination (indiscrimination) and inactivity etc., it means that the mode of ignorance has prevailed overpowering the modes of goodness and passion.

The three modes – of goodness, of passion and of ignorance being subtle are beyond the access of the senses and the mind. So they are not clearly perceived, they can be perceived by their marks or symptoms. So the Lord has discussed their marks in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth verses so that the striver may develop the mode of goodness by prevailing over the modes of passion and ignorance.

A Vital Fact

A striver observes that the three modes – of goodness, of passion and of ignorance are born, they perish and they undergo modifications, while he himself remains the same. The marks of the three modes are perceived while he himself is the onlooker. So he is different from them. But by assuming his identification with them, he assumes the flaws such as lust and anger etc., in him. This is an invitation to these flaws. While he becomes angry, he justifies his anger by thinking that every body gets angry. At other times he regards himself as a man possessed with anger even when he is not angry. Thus this anger gets rooted in his ego and it becomes difficult for him to get rid of it. Actually these flaws don't abide in him because he is permanent and flawless while these flaws stay in the mind and intellect temporarily because they appear and disappear. So a striver without identifying himself with the mind and intellect should have a firm faith that there are no flaws in him. By doing so, the flaws such as anger etc., totally perish gradually.

The Lord while discussing the marks of the three modes of nature warns a striver to be aware of the fact that the modes and their traits being the evolutes of nature undergo changes while he himself being a portion of the Lord is imperishable and does not undergo any change. By thinking so the mode of goodness naturally develops, overpowering the modes of ignorance and passion. Attachment to the happiness of the mode of goodness is also a stumbling block to the attainment of the transcendental state. So a striver should not be attached to the happiness born of the mode of goodness, because this sort of attachment is a mark of the mode of passion. From attachment springs up desire and from desire (unfulfilled) ensues anger. Delusion arises from anger. This delusion misleads a person from the mode of passion to the mode of ignorance and he has a fall (Gītā 2/62-63).

Link:–In the next two verses the Lord points out the destiny which awaits a man who dies during the predominance of one of the modes of nature.

यदा सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे तु प्रलयं याति देहभृत्।
तदोत्तमविदां लोकानमलान्प्रतिपद्यते ॥ १४ ॥

yadā sattve pravṛddhe tu pralayaṁ yāti dehabhṛt
tadottamavidāṁ lokānamalānpratipadyate

When a man dies during the predominance of Sattva (Goodness), he attains to the pure worlds of those who know the Highest. 14

Comment:

'Yadā sattve pravṛddhe tu pralayaṁ yāti dehabhṛt tadottama-vidāṁ lokānamalān-pratipadyate'— A man may be naturally established in any one of the three Guṇas (Modes) Sattva, Rajas or Tamas. Sattvaguṇa in its nature is immaculate. He who dies during the predominance of the Sattva (Goodness), he attains to the pure worlds of those who know the Highest.

The term 'Uttamavidām' denotes the knower of the Highest (Great sages), having lofty feelings, possessing true knowledge and performing pious actions. The person who dies in the mode of goodness, which may be the temporary phase of his life, is elevated to the worlds where great sages and saints live. It means that the good traits born of the modes of nature are as good as are the pious actions. From this view there is greater importance of the feelings (modes) in the actions than the actions themselves which are sanctioned by the scriptures. Therefore the mode of goodness occupies a very high place. Out of the objects, actions, modes and aim, actions are superior to objects, modes are superior to actions and the aim is superior to the modes.

The mode of goodness is more subtle and wide spread than the modes of passion and ignorance. In the world also the diet of the subtle beings is less than the gross ones as the gods being subtle are satisfied only with the smell. But as far as the power is concerned, the power of the subtle is more than the gross. So the persons having predominance of the subtle mode (feelings) of goodness attain to the higher world.

Now a doubt arises how a person who dies during the predominance of the Sattva (Goodness) which may be the temporary phase of his life attains to the higher worlds which are attained by those who perform virtuous actions throughout their life. The clarification is that there is a special concession from the Lord at the time of death that thinking of whatever object one leaves the body, that and that alone he attains (Gītā 8/6). So a person dying during the predominance of the mode of goodness attains to the higher pure worlds, there is no doubt about it.

रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा कर्मसङ्गिषु जायते।
तथा प्रलीनस्तमसि मूढयोनिषु जायते॥ १५॥

rajasi pralayaṁ gatvā karmasaṅgiṣu jāyate
tathā pralīnastamasi mūḍhayoniṣu jāyate

When one dies in the mode of passion, he is born among those attached to action; and when he dies in the mode of ignorance, he is born in the wombs of the duluded. 15

Comment:

'Rajasi pralayaṁ gatvā karma-saṅgiṣu jāyate'—When a person dies during the predominance of the mode of passion when propensities such as greed, activity, unrest and craving etc., increase, he is born among those human beings who are attached to action.

He, whose conduct has been good throughout his life and who has performed good actions, if he dies when the mode of passion is predominant, is born as a human being with good conduct and emotions and performs good actions. If a person possessing no virtues dies when there is predominance of the mode of passion with propensities such as greed etc., he is born as a man who is attached to objects, persons and actions etc. He who dies during the predominance of the mode of passion and whose life has been full of evil propensities such as greed and anger etc., is born as a human being possessing the

demoniac traits. It means that even as human beings they are born of three kinds according to the traits of the previous life. But all of them possess discrimination bestowed upon them by the Lord. By attaching importance to this discrimination every human being through spiritual practice, good company and study of the scriptures etc., can realize God because they are eligible for God-Realization.

'Tathā pralīnastamasi mūḍha-yoniṣu jāyate'—The person who dies during the predominance of the mode of ignorance when there is an increase in propensities such as negligence, delusion and unillumination etc., he is born in the wombs of the deluded (senseless) creatures such as beasts, birds, moths, insects, trees and creepers etc. Out of those deluded ones trees and creepers etc., are more deluded than birds and beasts etc.

If a person performs good actions but at the time of death has the predominance of the mode of ignorance and is born in the womb of the deluded one, there also he maintains his virtues, good conduct and nature. As the sage named Bharata died during the predominance of the mode of ignorance by thinking of the deer to whom he was too much attached and so he was born as a deer. But because of the renunciation and penance of his previous human birth, he did not live with his mother and instead of eating green leaves, he ate dry leaves. He possessed so much of carefulness during his life as a deer as is rarely possessed even by human beings.

Link:–Why does the predominance of the three modes at the time of death yield different results? The answer comes:—

कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम् ।
रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम् ॥ १६ ॥

karmaṇaḥ sukṛtasyāhuḥ sāttvikaṁ nirmalaṁ phalam
rajasastu phalaṁ duḥkhamajñānaṁ tamasaḥ phalam

The fruit of good actions is said to be Sāttvika and pure, the fruit of Rājasa is pain while the fruit of Tāmasa is ignorance. 16

Comment:

[Actually actions are neither Sāttvika, nor Rājasa nor Tāmasa, it is the agent of those actions who is Sāttvika, Rājasa or Tāmasa. The actions performed by the Sāttvika, Rājasa and Tāmasa doers are called Sāttvika, Rājasa and Tāmasa respectively.]

'Karmaṇaḥ sukṛtasyāhuḥ sāttvikaṁ nirmalaṁ phalam'—Sattva-guṇa (The mode of goodness) is pure and flawless. The action performed by the Sāttvika doer (agent) is also Sāttvika because the doer is reflected in his activity; and the fruit of that action is also pure and pleasant.

So long as a doer has his connection with the Sattvaguṇa (the mode of goodness), even though he has no desire for the fruit of action, he is said to be the Sāttvika doer and his actions bear fruit. But when his connection with the mode is renounced, he is no more called the Sāttvika doer and his actions bear no fruit, they turn into inaction.

'Rajasastu phalaṁ duḥkham'—Rajoguṇa is full of attachment. The actions performed by a Rājasika doer are Rājasika and so is their fruit. It means that Rājasika actions are performed with the view of getting pleasures, comforts, luxuries, respect and praise etc., here and hereafter. But these pleasures born of contacts (with objects) are verily sources of pain (sorrow) (Gītā 5/22). They mislead to the cycle of birth and death. So the Lord has declared the fruit of Rājasa action pain.

Rajoguṇa (the mode of passion) gives birth to sin and pain. A person possessing the mode of passion performs sinful actions

which bear painful fruit. In the thirty-sixth verse of the third chapter Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, "By what is a man impelled to commit sin, as if by force, even against his will?" The Lord answered, "It is craving (desire), born of the mode of passion, which impels a man to commit sin."

'Ajñānam tamasaḥ phalam'—Tamo-guṇa is full of delusion. The actions by a Tāmasika person are performed without thinking of their fruit in the form of violence and loss etc., out of delusion. So such a person is reborn after death in the species of stupid creatures such as beasts, birds, moths, insects, trees and creepers etc.

This verse can be summed up as follows. The Sāttvika person in all the circumstances, is happy, the Rājasika one is sad while the Tāmasika one is ignorant having no discrimination.

So long as a person is attached to actions, and the modes of nature, he can't be happy because the actions bear different kinds of fruit in the form of modes and circumstances. But when he renounces his attachment to actions and modes he can't be sad and bound.

The thought at the time of death is the root of a being's rebirth. The predominance of any one of the modes is the root of that thought. The predominance of a mode depends upon actions. It means that a person performs actions according to the mode and those actions strengthen the mode and he thinks at the time of death according to that mode of nature. Thus the thought of the last moment, mode of nature and actions are responsible for a person's rebirth in good and bad species.

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord explained the fruits of the predominance of the three Guṇas (Modes). Now in the next verse He explains how the Guṇas activate their respective actions.

सत्त्वात्संजायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च।
प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च॥ १७॥

sattvātsañjāyate jñānam rajaso lobha eva ca
pramādamohau tamaso bhavato'jñānameva ca

From Sattva (the mode of goodness) arises knowledge, from Rājasa (the mode of passion) arises greed and from Tāmasa (the mode of ignorance) arise heedlessness, delusion and ignorance. 17

Comment:

'Sattvātsañjāyate jñānam'—Sattva awakens knowledge or discrimination. That discrimination enables a man to perform only the good actions which bear Sāttvika and pure fruit.

'Rajaso lobha eva ca'—Rajoguṇa gives birth to greed etc. The actions of a greedy person bear painful fruit.

Greed is the lust for multiplying possessions. Greed can manifest itself in two forms – not to incur proper expenditure and to accumulate wealth etc., by foul means. If a person does not spend money according to the need of the moment because of greed, he loses peace of mind. If he accumulates and hoards money by foul means, he incurs sins which mislead him to hells and eighty-four lac forms of lives which are full of afflictions.

'Pramādamohau tamaso bhavato'-jñānameva ca'—Heedlessness, delusion and ignorance arise from Tāmasa. A Tāmasika man thinks the wrong to be right and regards all things contrary (Gītā 18/32).

In this verse it is mentioned that ignorance arises from Tāmasa while in the eighth verse of the chapter Tāmasa has been said to be born of ignorance. It means that as a seed

is born of a tree and a tree is born of the seed, ignorance is born of Tāmasa and Tāmasa is born of ignorance.

In the eighth verse the Lord explained heedlessness, indolence and sleep as the three propensities of Tāmasa, while in the thirteenth verse as well as in this verse there is mention of heedlessness but there is no mention of sleep. It indicates that necessary sleep is neither Tāmasa nor forbidden nor misleads to bondage but is a necessity for a Sāttvika person as well as a transcendental person (who has transcended the three modes of nature). It is only excessive sleep which is Tāmasa and which binds a person because it makes him lazy, idle and a lot of time is wasted.

An Important Fact

The soul (spirit) in spite of being a fragment of the Lord assumes its affinity with Matter (Nature) and its modes. Those modes give birth to the propensities in the mind. Those propensities force a person to perform the same sort of actions. The fruit of those actions causes a person to be born in good and evil wombs. It means that during life those actions bear fruit in the form of favourable and unfavourable circumstances. While after death they cause his birth in good and evil wombs. But in fact it is propensities of modes at the root of actions which conduce him to have his birth in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21). It means that attachment to actions is not weaker than actions. As actions bear good and bad fruit, attachment to the modes of nature also bears good and bad fruit (Gītā 8/6). So here in the context of fourteen verses from the fifth to the eighteenth, the Lord first in the fourteenth and the fifteenth verses explained the destiny which awaits a man who dies during the predominance of one of the modes of nature; then in the sixteenth verse He explained the fruit of the actions in the form of favourable and unfavourable circumstances and finally in the eighteenth verse He will explain the different destinies awaiting those who are established in the three Guṇas. Thus different propensities arise from these Guṇas (Modes) and they force a person to perform the same sort of actions. It has been described in this verse. In this topic the chief characteristic of the modes has been mentioned in this verse.

The person, whose aim is God- Realization, not mundane pleasures and prosperity, does not remain established in Prakṛti (Matter) (Nature). So he is not controlled by the modes of nature. Through spiritual practice when his egoism changes and he has a firm resolve to attain his aim, he realizes the self which transcends the three modes. This is called wisdom (knowledge) of the self which has been delineated by the Lord in the first and the second verses of this chapter and also in the description of the marks and the conduct of the person who has transcended the three modes in the five verses from the twenty-second to the twenty-sixth. Thus the Lord in this chapter has explained how a person can realize the self or Him by transcending the three Guṇas.

Link:–In the fourteenth and the fifteenth verses the Lord pointed out the destiny which awaits a man during the predominance of one of the modes of nature. Now in the next verse He explains the different destinies awaiting those who are established in the three Guṇas (Modes of nature).

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।
जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥ १८ ॥

ūrdhvam gacchanti sattvasthā madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ
jaghanyaguṇavṛttisthā adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ

Those who are established in the mode of goodness rise upwards, those in the mode of passion remain in the middle (regions); and those in the mode of ignorance sink downwards. 18

Comment:

'Ūrdhvaṁ gacchanti sattvasthā'—Sattvasthā (Who are established in the mode of goodness) are those who have the predominance of the mode of goodness, and who because of that mode observe self control and fast, offer charity, and perform virtuous actions such as running of cowpens and water huts, construction of roads, plantation of trees and supply of food free of cost etc. Such type of people after giving up the physical body go upwards to the regions higher than the earth, viz., heaven etc., which have been referred to in the fourteenth verse of the chapter as the pure worlds of those who know the Highest. Those persons who go to the higher regions have predominance of the fire element.

'Madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ'—'Rājasāḥ' (Who are established in the mode of passion) are those who have predominance of passion and attachment and who are engaged in pleasures and prosperity without going against the ordinance of the scriptures. Such type of persons are reborn on the earth as human beings in whom there is predominance of the earth element.

The term 'Tiṣṭhanti' (Dwell) denotes that they dwell in the middle region i.e., they are reborn as human beings on the earth because of their attachment to things and persons etc., though their conduct is in accordance with the ordinance of the scriptures.

'Jaghanyaguṇavṛttisthā adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ'—The persons having predominance of the mode of ignorance, being overpowered by heedlessness, indolence and sleep waste their time and money on trifles and futile pursuits. They don't discharge their duties sincerely, they think ill of others and they perform evil actions such as theft, robbery and fraud etc. Such type of persons die in the predominance of 'Tamoguṇa' go downwards, and degrade themselves.

They go downwards in two ways–lower births and lower regions. They are either reborn in lower species such as beasts, birds, moths, insects, snakes, scorpions and evil spirits etc., or they undergo terrible sufferings and tortures in the infernal regions known as Vaitariṇī, Asipatra, Lālābhakṣa, Kumbhīpāka, Raurava and Mahāraurava etc. Those who in spite of having the modes of goodness and passion in their life, die during the predominance of the mode of ignorance, take birth in the womb of the deluded (Gītā 14/15) while those who have the predominance of the mode of ignorance throughout their life, after death fall into a foul hell (Gītā 16/16). It means that a person takes rebirth according to the thought of the last moment but he gets pleasures or pains in that life according to the actions performed in the previous birth. For example, if a man has performed good actions in his life but if at the last moment he thinks of a dog, he will be born as a dog but he will get comforts and luxuries. On the other hand if a person has performed evil actions but if he thinks of a man at the time of death, he will take rebirth as a man but he will be deprived even of the bare necessities of life and will ever suffer from diseases.

In order to develop the mode of goodness (Sāttvika Guṇa) a striver, should study the scripture, keep company of noble persons, reside in holy places of pilgrimages, devote mornings and evenings, the most suited time to devotion and meditation and discharge his duty according of his caste, creed, stage of life and the ordinance of the scriptures. He should meditate on God and chant the Sāttvika sacred formulas. In Śrīmadbhāgavata there are ten factors which are responsible to develop the Guṇas (Modes). They are– scriptures, water (diet), subjects (Company), place, time, actions, birth, sacred formula (Mantra) and past influences (Saṁskāra). They develop Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika Guṇas according to their own nature.

An Important Fact

A person having predominance of the mode of passion (Rajoguṇa) at the time of death, is reborn in the mortal world as a human being (14/15) and a person established in the mode of passion is also

reborn as a human being (14/18). It means that all human beings have only the mode of passion, they have neither the mode of goodness (Sattvaguṇa) nor the mode of ignorance (Tamoguṇa). But actually it is not so because the Lord Himself declares that when a man dies during the predominance of Sattva (Goodness), he attains to the pure worlds (14/14) and when he dies being established in the mode of goodness he goes to the higher regions (14/18). Similarly He declares that if a person dies during the predominance of Tamas (Ignorance) he is born in the womb of the deluded (14/15) and if he dies when he is established in the mode of ignorance, he sinks downwards (14/18)). The three modes (Guṇas) of goodness (Sattva), passion (Rajas) and ignorance (Tamas) bind down the imperishable spirit to the body (14/5). The whole world is deluded by the threefold modes of nature (7/13). The doers are said to be of three types–Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika (18/26-28). There is no being in the entire universe which is free from the three modes born of nature (18/40).

Those who go to the higher regions have predominance of the mode of goodness while the modes of passion and ignorance occupy a secondary place. Those who are born in the mortal world as human beings have predominance of the mode of passion while the mode of goodness occupies a subsidiary place and the mode of ignorance occupies a third place. Those who sink downwards have predominance of the mode of ignorance while the modes of passion and goodness respectively occupy the second and third place. Thus when there is predominance of one of the modes in a person, he also possesses the other two modes to a certain extent. Thus with the predominance of any one of the modes every being has a different nature.

As the Lord in spite of performing the Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika actions, remains above these threefold modes of nature (7/13), similarly the great man who transcends the modes of nature remains unaffected by the reactions of the Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika propensities (14/22). Therefore adoration to the Lord and company of the transcendental souls are helpful for a striver in transcending the modes of nature.

Link:–Having discussed the three modes of nature from the fifth to the eighteenth verses, now the Lord in the next two verses discusses the means of rising above the three Guṇas (Modes) as well as its reward.

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति ।
गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ॥ १९ ॥

nānyaṁ guṇebhyaḥ kartāraṁ yadā draṣṭānupaśyati
guṇebhyaśca paraṁ vetti madbhāvaṁ so'dhigacchati

When the seer beholds no agent other than the modes and knows the self beyond the modes, he attains to My Being. 19

Comment:

'Nānyaṁ guṇebhyaḥ kartāraṁ yadā draṣṭānupaśyati guṇebhyaśca paraṁ vetti madbhāvaṁ so'dhigacchati'—There is no agent other than the Guṇas (Modes) i.e., the modes alone are responsible for all actions and modifications. The self, the illuminator of the modes, is an observer who is in no way contaminated by the modes and who has no connection with the modes and actions because they ever undergo modifications while there is no modification at all in the self. The thoughtful striver who attains knowledge of the self

attains to the Lord's Being i.e., becomes identical with Him. It means that the striver (self) who assumed his affinity with the Guṇas (Modes) by error, that assumption is wiped out and he realizes his identity with the Lord which is natural.

गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन्देही देहसमुद्भवान्।
जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्नुते ॥ २० ॥

guṇānetānatītya trīndehī dehasamudbhavān
janmamṛtyujarāduḥkhairvimukto'mṛtamaśnute

When the embodied soul (wiseman) rises above these three Guṇas (Modes) out of which the body is evolved, he is freed from birth, death, old age and pain and attains to immortality. 20

Comment:

'Guṇānetānatītya trīndehī dehasamudbhavān'—Though a thoughtful person (soul) has no connection with the body, yet the people think him dwelling in the body. So he has been termed as 'Dehī' (Embodied Soul).

The body is evolved out of these modes. A man (soul) assumes his affinity with these modes. Attachment to these modes is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21). A thoughtful person rises above the three modes which have been discussed from the fifth to the eighteenth verses of this chapter i.e., he renounces his assumed affinity with them because he clearly perceives that he (self) is distinct from the Guṇas, having no connection at all because the self undergoes no change while the Guṇas always undergo modifications. The self has no connection even with Prakṛti (Matter) (Nature) from which these modes evolve. Then how can he (self) have any affinity with Guṇas?

'Janmamṛtyujarāduḥkhairvimukto'mṛtamaśnute'—When a striver rises above these three modes, he becomes free from the sufferings of birth, death and old age because attachment to these modes is the cause of his birth etc. These modes appear and disappear and they also undergo modifications in the forms–Sāttvika, Rājasa and Tāmasa while he (the self) ever remains detached and so he undergoes no modifications in the form of birth, death and old age. It is because of his attachment to the Guṇas that he suffers the pangs of birth, death and old age. One who realizes the self totally detached from these modes, attains to the immortality which is natural.

A man (soul) by his identification with the body regards its death as his death. He being a portion of the Lord is immortal but being attached to pleasures and prosperity and having a desire to maintain the decaying and dying body, he does not realize his immortality. A thoughtful person applying his discrimination comes to know that he is different from the body and thus realizes his immortality.

Attainment to His Being as described in the preceding verse and attainment to immortality described in this verse are one and the same.

In verses 7/29, 13/8 and 14/20 there is mention only of the old age, there is no mention of childhood and youth. Why? The reason is that a person does not suffer so much in these two stages as he suffers in old age because in old age he becomes feeble and has not much physical power. At the time of death also he suffers a lot of afflictions. But he who rises above the three Guṇas becomes free from the pain of birth, death and old age for ever.

He who realizes the true nature of the self is not reborn. During his life he will pass through the stages of old age and death, but they will not give him pain.

A man (the self) by his identification with the body is reborn and assumes the body's old age and pain etc., in him. The body is evolved out of the three modes. Transcendental great person being free from the three modes becomes free from all the pains which he bore because of his assumed identification with the body.

Therefore every person should realize his transcendental self before death. When he transcends the three Guṇas (Modes), he is freed from all the sufferings of old age and death and he realizes his immortality and is not reborn.

Link:–Having heard from Lord Kṛṣṇa the truth that the embodied soul transcending the three Guṇas attains to immortality, Arjuna became curious to know the characteristics and conduct of such a person who has transcended the three Guṇas and also the means of rising above them and so he puts the question:–

अर्जुन उवाच

कैर्लिङ्गैस्त्रीन्गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो ।
किमाचारः कथं चैतांस्त्रीन्गुणानतिवर्तते ॥ २१ ॥

arjuna uvāca

kairliṅgaistrīnguṇānetānatīto bhavati prabho
kimācāraḥ katham caitāṁstrīnguṇānativartate

Arjuna said:

What are the marks of him who has transcended the three Guṇas (Modes), O Lord? What is his conduct? How does he transcend the three modes? 21

Comment:

'Kairliṅgaistrīnguṇānetānatīto bhavati prabho'— O Lord, I want to know the characteristics of a person who has transcended the three modes of nature. What are the symptoms of such a person by which he can be distinguised from other common people?

'Kimācāraḥ'—What is his conduct, what is his daily routine, how does he live and what are his activities? Are they regulated or non regulated? How are they different from those of common men?

'Katham caitāṁstrīnguṇānativartate'— What is the means by which one can transcend the three modes?

Link:–In response to Arjuna's first question the Lord explains the marks of the person who has transcended the three Guṇas (Modes) in the next two verses:

श्रीभगवानुवाच

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।
न द्वेष्टि संप्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ॥ २२ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

prakāśaṁ ca pravṛttiṁ ca mohameva ca pāṇḍava
na dveṣṭi saṁpravṛttāni na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣati

The Blessed Lord said:

O Pāṇḍava, he does not hate illumination, activity and delusion when they are present nor does he long for them when they are absent. 22

Comment:

'Prakāśaṁ ca'—Purity of the senses and mind is called 'Prakāśa' or illumination. It means that illumination is the power which enables the senses to perceive the five objects of senses, the mind to think and the intellect to judge.

The Lord (in 14/11) explained two marks of the mode of Sattva (Goodness) – illumination (Purity) and knowledge. Out of the two, here only illumination has been mentioned because in the mode of goodness illumination occupies a predominant place because unless there is illumination (purity) in the senses, mind and intellect, discrimination is not aroused. Illumination arouses knowledge. So knowledge should be included within illumination.

'Pravṛttiṁ ca'—So long as a person is attached to the modes of nature, the propensities, such as greed, activity, undertaking of actions, unrest and craving, of the mode of passion spring up. But when a man rises above the three Guṇas (Modes), the propensities of the mode of passion don't spring up but there is activity free from attachment and desire. Thus the activity of the transcendental person is flawless.

The mode of passion has two forms – attachment and actions. Out of the two, attachment is the root of all sufferings. A trsanscendental person is free from attachment. But he performs actions without having any desire for the fruit of actions. These actions denote 'Pravṛtti' (Activity).

'Mohameva ca pāṇḍava' —Delusion can be of two kinds (i) Absence of discrimination between the real and the unreal or between what ought to be done and what ought not to be done (ii) Error in practical life. As far as the first sort of delusion is concerned, a transcendental soul is totally free from it. But as far as an error in practical life is concerned, even a transcendental person may commit it. He may have an optical illusion, and may take a rope as a snake and a shell as a piece of silver by error.

'Na dveṣṭi saṁpravṛttāni na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣati' — Illumination is the effect of Sattva, activity of Rajas and delusion of Tamas. A transcendental person does not hate illumination, activity and delusion when they are present nor does he long for them when they are absent. It means that he does not hate them by thinking why they have evolved and that they should disappear, nor does he desire that they should continue or they should evolve again. A person who has transcended the three modes of nature, remains indifferent to them.

An Important Fact

One thing is 'cropping up of thoughts' while another is 'to be engaged in thoughts' (have the feeling of attachment and aversion). There is a world of difference between the two. The former is coṣmic while the latter is personal. We are not responsible for what happens in the world but we are held responsible for what we do. Moreover by having attachment and aversion for the worldly activities we assume our affinity with them i.e., we become the doer and so we have to get the fruit. If we don't assume our affinity with them, we'll not be responsible for them and we'll not have to reap their fruit (because they are performed by the body, a fragment of the world) in the same way as we are not held responsible for a numberless actions which are performed in the world through cosmic power. So a striver should have neither attachment nor aversion to the good and evil propensities evolved from the three modes of nature i.e., he should not assume his affinity with them.

These propensities appear in the mind of even the transcendental souls. They appear and again disappear. But he has

neither attachment nor aversion for them, he does not even perceive them as such because he beholds nothing else besides the Lord in the entire universe.

One is to perceive while the other is automatically seen. 'To see' comes within 'doing' and 'automatically seen' comes within 'what happens.' Fault lies in 'seeing' not in 'what is automatically seen.' A striver should not feel perturbed even if he perceives the worst propensity in his mind. He should have neither attachment nor aversion to it. He commits an error that he is either attached to those propensities or has an aversion to them and so he is entangled. Lord Rāma says to His younger brother, Bharata in the Rāmacaritamānasa:–

"O dear! There are innumerable virtues and vices evolved by the deluding potency of the Lord. Discrimination consists in their non-perception while ignorance consists in their perception" (7/41).

A striver should think seriously that dispositions appear and disappear but he (the self) remains the same. The changeable can't see the changeable only the changeless can see the changeable. This is the rule. It proves that the self is the observer while the dispositions are to be observed. So he is different from them. So he should not assume his affinity with them, he should neither be pleased nor displeased with the appearance and disappearance of the kaleidoscopic mutable and perishable dispositions. He should ever remain fixed in his real self which is non-changing, immutable and imperishable.

उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते ।
गुणा वर्तन्त इत्येव योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥ २३ ॥

udāsīnavadāsīno guṇairyo na vicālyate
guṇā vartanta ityeva yo'vatiṣṭhati neṅgate

He seated like one unconcerned, is not moved by the modes of nature and he stands apart without wavering, knowing that it is only the modes that act. 23

Comment:

'Udāsīnavadāsīnaḥ'—When two persons fight, he who sides with the one is called partial. He who is just to both is a mediator while 'Udāsīna' is he who sees the two but has an attitude of indifference towards either of the two. From the view point of the realized soul who has risen above the three Guṇas there is no existence of the world except God. He himself has merged in God. So to whom should he be indifferent? Therefore no question of his being indifferent arises. But to the common people he seems indifferent to the world. That state is described as 'Udāsīnavat.'

'Guṇairyo na vicālyate'—The propensities of the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance appear in his mind but he is not moved by them. He remains unconcerned as he remains when those propensities come to the minds of others because he perceives that nothing has its existence besides the Lord.

'Guṇā vartanta ityeva yo'vatiṣṭhati'—He remains fixed in the self by understanding that it is the modes which are acting on the modes (Gītā 3/28).

'Neṅgate'—The person who rises above the three modes of nature does not perform any action himself because in the imperishable pure self there is no activity.

[In the above mentioned two verses the Lord has described the attitude of indifference of the person who has transcended the modes of nature.]

Link:–In the next two verses the Lord answers Arjuna's second question, "What is his conduct?"

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।
तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥ २४ ॥
मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥ २५ ॥

samaduḥkhasukhaḥ svasthaḥ samaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ
tulyapriyāpriyo dhīrastulyanindātmasaṁstutiḥ
mānāpamānayostulyastulyo mitrāripakṣayoḥ
sarvārambhaparityāgī guṇātītaḥ sa ucyate

He regards pain and pleasure alike, dwells in his own self, views a clod of earth, a stone and gold alike, remains the same amidst the pleasant and the unpleasant, is firm and views blame and praise alike. He is the same in honour and dishonour and the same to friends and foes, he has abandoned all undertakings – such a man is said to have risen above the modes of nature. 24-25

Comment:

'Dhīraḥ samaduḥkhasukhaḥ'—A person having transcended the modes of nature discriminates the real from the unreal and remains firm (fixed) in the self.

He remains the same in desirable and undesirable circumstances viz., pleasure and pain which appear as the fruit of his past actions. They can't make him happy and sad.

'Svasthaḥ'—In the self there is neither pleasure nor pain. The self is their illuminator. He remains established in the self.

'Samaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ'—He has neither attachment nor aversion to a clod of earth, a piece of stone and a piece of gold. He makes their proper use but remains alike in their gain and loss. Not to know the distinction between a clod of earth, a stone and gold is not even-mindedness Having known their distinction, not to have attraction and aversion to them is even-mindedness. The knowledge of their distinction is not a fault, but to be affected by them is an evil.

'Tulyapriyāpriyaḥ'—He remains alike in success and failure which he gets here as the fruit of his actions.

'Tulyanindātmasaṁstutiḥ'— Praise and blame mainly relate to name. The man beyond Guṇas has no connection at all with the name. He is neither pleased when he is praised, nor displeased when he is blamed. He has neither attachment to those who praise him nor aversion to those who blame him. This is a common trait that a man likes praise but dislikes blame. He who rises above Guṇas, knows the two but he treats both of them alike. He remains established in the self where praise and blame have no access.

Both praise and blame are activities done by others. To be pleased or displeased with them is a mistake. Whatever one's nature is and whatever his conviction is, he will speak accordingly. It is not just if a striver expects of others that they should not censure him. It is rather unjust if he compels other persons to praise him and not to blame him. He should be pleased when someone blames him because in that case his sins are wiped out and he is purified. When someone praises him, then his virtues are destroyed. So he should not be pleased with the praise because it involves danger.

'Mānāpamānayostulyaḥ'—A person regards honour and dishonour of the body or the name as his own when he identifies himself with the body. But the person, who has transcended the modes, having snapped his connection with the body is neither pleased with honour nor displeased with dishonour because he remains established

in the self which is free from all alterations and modifications. So he feels neither happy when he is honoured nor sad when he is dishonoured. He remains alike. To have the knowledge of honour and dishonour is not an evil. But to be happy and unhappy is an evil. Both are modifications of Nature.

'Tulyo mitrāripakṣayoḥ'— He entertains no feeling of friendship or enmity towards any one. But people find their own sentiment of friendship or enmity reflected in him. So even by knowing the fact that some other persons regard him as their friend or enemy, he maintains an attitude of impartiality towards them.

If he has to divide a thing between the two–one who regards him as a friend and the other who regards him as an enemy, he gives a bit less to the former than to the latter because he is generous to the latter even in judgement. This is also equanimity or even-mindedness.

'Sarvārambhaparityāgī'—He abandons all new undertakings for pleasures and prosperity. He performs actions according to the cirumstances being free from the feelings of egoism, attachment, having no desire for their fruit and abandons them without having any desire for praise and honour etc.

'Guṇātītaḥ sa ucyate'— Such a person is said to have risen above the three Guṇas (Modes of nature).

In fact the person, who has transcended the three modes of nature, cannot, have any marks. Marks vest in the modes of Prakṛti or in Prakṛti. How can he, who has marks, transcend Guṇas? Arjuna has inquired marks of such a person. The Lord has described those marks. In fact these are the marks of his so-called inner sense and body. These marks are only hints of such a person. They can't describe him. The modes are the evolutes of nature while the body, senses, mind and intellect are the evolutes of modes. So the senses, mind and intellect can't even fully describe the modes which are their cause. How can they describe Prakṛti, the cause of modes? Then how is it possible for them to describe the one who has transcended the modes?

Here the Lord has mentioned the four pairs of opposites — pleasure and pain, pleasant and unpleasant, praise and blame and honour and dishonour to denote that one who becomes equanimous in them, he becomes equanimous in other pairs of opposites also easily. A person having transcended the three modes regards these pairs alike. He ever remains balanced and his peace is never disturbed.

[In the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth verses the Lord has described equanimity of the great person who has transcended the three modes of nature.]

Link:–Now the Lord in the next verse answers Arjuna's third question — "How does he transcend the three modes?"

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।
स गुणान्समतीत्यैतान्ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥ २६ ॥

māṁ ca yo'vyabhicāreṇa bhaktiyogena sevate
sa guṇānsamatītyaitānbrahmabhūyāya kalpate

He who serves Me with exclusive devotion, rises above the three modes and becomes eligible for attaining Brahma. 26

Comment:

[Though the Lord discussed the means of rising above the modes in the nineteenth and the twentieth verses of this chapter, yet Arjuna in the twenty-first verse again asked the question: What is the means of attaining to the transcendental position? It means that Arjuna wants to know any other

means besides the one already discussed. Therefore the Lord regarding Arjuna as eligible for devotion, explains the path of devotion.]

'Mām ca yo'vyabhicāreṇa bhaktīyogena sevate'— In this clause the term 'Yaḥ' (Who) denotes the server (worshipper), the term 'Mām' (Me) denotes the worshipped and the expression 'Avyabhicāreṇa bhaktiyogena sevate' denotes exclusive devotion (worship). In exclusive devotion—a devotee without depending either on the world or even on the Disciplines of Knowledge and devotion etc., depends only on God and takes refuge only in Him.

'Sa guṇānsamatītyaitān'— He who worships the Lord with exclusive devotion has not to rise above the three modes but by the Lord's grace the modes are automatically transcended by him (Gītā 12/6-7).

'Brahmabhūyāya kalpate'— Having transcended the modes he becomes eligible for attaining Brahma. Here the Lord has talked about devotion. So He should have said that he becomes eligible for attaining Him instead of saying that he becomes eligible for attaining Brahma. The reason is that Arjuna asked the means of transcending the modes (attainment of Brahma, the Absolute). So the Lord talked like this.

Secondly in the scriptures it is mentioned that he who worships the Lord with exclusive devotion, has not to adopt any other means even in the Discipline of Knowledge for becoming eligible to attain Brahma. He automatically becomes eligible to attain Brahma. But a devotee is not satisfied with this sort of attainment, he wants to please the Lord. He regards the Lord's pleasure as his own pleasure. It means that one who surrenders himself to the Lord, becomes eligible for attaining Brahma automatically. This is something different whether he attaches importance to this sort of attainment or not.

Thirdly, the Absolute, Who is attained by the Disciplines of Knowledge and Action etc., is also attained by the Discipline of Devotion. The means to attain Him may be different but what is attained is the same Absolute.

Link:–How does a devotee who worships the Lord become eligible for attaining Brahma? The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च।
शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च॥ २७॥

brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāhamamṛtasyāvyayasya ca
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikāntikasya ca

For I am the abode of Brahma, the Immortal and the Imperishable, of eternal Dharma (Law or virtue) and of absolute bliss. 27

Comment:

'Brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham'— When Lord Kṛṣṇa declares that He is the abode of Brahma, He means to say that He has His identity with Brahma. As the burning fire which is seen and the fire present in a piece of wood which is not seen are one and the same, similarly the Lord is the same as endowed with form and also without form. As the nose smells the same food while the tongue tastes it, similarly the same Lord is Brahma for a devotee following the Discipline of Knowledge and Lord Kṛṣṇa for a devotee of devotion.

In fact Lord Kṛṣṇa and Brahma are one and the same. The Lord has used the term 'Brahma' for Himself in 5/10 and also 'unmanifested form' in 9/4. So He is both with form and without form.

'Amṛtasyāvyayasya ca'—The Lord is the Immortal and the imperishable. It means that the Immortal and the Imperishable are

not two different entities, but one and the same. The same immortality has been described in 13/12 and 14/20.

'Śāśvatasya ca dharmasya'— Lord Kṛṣṇa is the abode of eternal Dharma, and eternal Dharma is the abode of the Lord. It means that the Lord and eternal Dharma are one and the same*. In the Gītā Arjuna has addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa as the guardian of the eternal Dharma (Law) (11/18). God also incarnates for the establishment of the Sanātana Dharma (4/8).

'Sukhasyaikāntikasya ca'—Lord Kṛṣṇa is the abode of absolute bliss and absolute bliss is the abode of the Lord. The same absolute bliss has been called eternal bliss (5/21), supreme bliss (6/21) and infinite bliss (6/28).

In this verse in the expression 'Brahmaṇaḥ' and 'Amṛtasya' like the expression 'Rāhoḥ śiraḥ' the sixth inflexion has been used which means that 'Rāhu' and 'Śiraḥ' (head) are not two different entities but both are one and the same. Similarly here Brahma, the Immortal, the Imperishable is Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Kṛṣṇa is Brahma, the Immortal, the Imperishable. In this verse emphasis has been laid on the identity of Lord Kṛṣṇa with Brahma, the Imperishable and the Eternal Dharma etc. All of them in spite of being called by different names are one and the same. Thus a devotee, who worships Lord Kṛṣṇa, attains Brahma.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे गुणत्रयविभागयोगो नाम चतुर्दशोऽध्यायः ॥१४॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde guṇatrayavibhāgayogo nāma caturdaśo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ, Tat, Sat, the names of the Lord, in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavad Gītā, the knowledge of Brahma, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, this is the fourteenth discourse designated:

"The Yoga of the Division of the Three Guṇas (Modes)."

In this chapter Sattva (Goodness), Raja (Passion) and Tama (Ignorance), the three modes of nature have been described. The person who transcends this three modes realizes his eternal union with the Lord. So the chapter has been entitled 'Guṇatrayavibhāgayoga' (Division of the Three Modes of Nature).

Words, letters and Uvāca (said) in the Fourteenth Chapter:

(1) In this chapter in **Atha Caturdaśao'dhyāyaḥ'** there are three words, in **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** etc., there are six words, in verses, there are three hundred and twenty-two words and there are thirteen concluding words. Thus the total number of words is three hundred and forty-four.

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* There are four important Dharmas (Religions) in the world. They are Hindū (Sanātana or Eternal), Bauddha, Christian and Muslim. The founders of Bauddha, Christian and Muslim religions are Buddha, Jesus Christ and Mohammada respectively. But the Sanātana Dharma was not originated by any one, it is eternal and beginningless like the Lord. This is a discovery by high sages. What is discovered, has its own preexistence. The methods of God-Realization described in other Dharmas are also the gift of 'Sanātana Dharma.'

When there is a decline of this Dharma, the Lord incarnates Himself for the establishment of Dharma (Gītā 4/7-8). So the Lord establishes it, He does not found it. Actually all the other religions are the product of Sanātana Dharma. So if their principles are obeyed without any desire for their fruit, they will lead to salvation undoubtedly. A deep thought for salvation as is described in Sanātana Dharma is not available in other religions. The principles of Sanātana Dharma (Hindū Dharma) are totally scientific and they lead to salvation.

(2) In this chapter in **'Atha caturdaśo'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are eight letters, in **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** etc., there are twenty letters, in verses there are eight hundred and sixty-four letters and there are fifty-one concluding letters. Thus the total number of the letters is nine hundred and forty-three. In this chapter there are thirty-two letters in each verse.

(3) In this chapter the term **'Uvāca'** (said) has been used thrice–**'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** twice and **'Arjuna Uvāca'** once.

Metres Used in the Fourteenth Chapter–

Out of the twenty-seven verses of this chapter, in the first quarter of the fifth verse 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'na-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the sixth and tenth verses 'ra-gaṇa' being used there is **'ra-vipulā'** metre; in the third quarter of the fifteenth and seventeenth verses 'bha-gaṇa' being used there is **'bha-vīpulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the nineteenth verse 'ma-gaṇa' being used there is **'ma-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the ninth verse 'bha-gaṇa' and in the third quarter 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'saṁkīrṇa-vipulā'** metre. The remaining twenty verses are possessed of the characteristics of right **'pathyāvaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

Śrī Hariḥ

FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

Introduction

In response to Arjuna's questions "Those devotees who ever earnest worship Thee and those who worship the Imperishable and the Unmanifested – which of them are better versed in Yoga?" the Lord declared the former to be superior to the latter. In the fifth verse the Lord while comparing the two declared. "The difficulty of those whose thoughts are set on the Unmanifested is greater, for the goal of the Unmanifested is hard to reach by the embodied beings." How to overcome this difficulty of body consciousness–this topic as well as the description of the Absolute has been given in the thirteenth and the fourteenth chapters.

In the twenty-first verse of the fourteenth chapter Arjuna asked "What are the marks & conduct of him who has transcended the three modes (guṇas) and how does he transcend them?" In response to this the Lord after discussing the marks and conduct of the person who has transcended the three modes in verses twenty-second to the twenty-fifth, in the twenty-sixth verse He explained unswerving devotion the means to transcend the three modes for the devotees who worship God with attributes. It means that the devotee who has exclusive devotion to God (who totally depends upon Him) transcends the three modes easily. The expression 'Avyabhicāreṇa bhaktiyogena' stands for freedom from dependence on the world through the 'path of devotion', the term 'Yaḥ' stands for the embodied soul while the term 'Mām' stands for God. So in the fifteenth chapter there is the description of these three subjects in detail.

Man (soul) being a fragment of God is transcendental but he is bound because of his identification with, attachment to desire for the body (world), the evolute of the modes. He is not liberated from these modes so long as he does not know the glory of the Lord Who has transcended the modes. Therefore the Lord introduces the fifteenth chapter in order to explain His glory and secret to enable a striver to cultivate unswerving devotion.

A man (soul) is a fragment of God (Gītā 15/7) and so he has his affinity only for God. But by error he assumes his affinity for the body, senses, mind and intellect, etc., which are evolutes of Nature, by regarding them as 'I' or 'mine' or for me. This is the main stumbling block to exclusive devotion. In order to remove this stumbling block the Lord in the first five verses of the fifteenth chapter having described the universe as a peepul tree, exhorts Arjuna to cut it down asunder with the axe of dispassion.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम्।
छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित्॥ १ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca
ūrdhvamūlamadhaḥśākhamaśvattham prāhuravyayam
chandāṁsi yasya parṇāni yastaṁ veda sa vedavit

The Blessed Lord said:

He who knows the peepul tree which is said to be imperishable as having its root above and branches below and whose leaves are the Vedas is the knower of the Vedas. 1

Comment:

'Ūrdhvamūlamadhaḥśākham'—

[Like the first two verses of the thirteenth chapter, here in the first verse of the fifteenth chapter also the Lord presents a view of all the topics of the entire chapter. The expression 'Ūrdhvamūlam' denotes God, the expression 'Adhaḥśākham' denotes Brahmā, the representative of all beings while the term 'Aśvattham' denotes the world. He who knows the omnipotent Lord (the root of the peepul tree in the form of the universe) in reality has been called 'Vedavit' (knower of the Vedas.]

Generally trees have their roots below and branches above. But this tree in the form of the universe is strange as it has its root above and branches below. The supreme abode of God from where there is no return is above all the other worlds. Brahmā is the main branch (stem) of the tree in the form of the world as he emanates first of all. The abode of Brahmā is lower than that of God. Brahmā is lower than God in position, virtues, rank and age etc., so he is called 'Adhaḥ'*. As the root is the foundation (support) of the entire tree, so is God the origin of the entire universe. Brahmā, the creator is born of Him and he has been described by the expression 'Adhaḥśākham' (branches below).

God is the illuminator and base of the entire creation and He is superior to everyone in everyway. "There is none equal to Thee, how could then there be one superior to Thee in the three worlds" (Gītā 11/43)† ? Being the base and the support of the entire universe He is called 'Ūrdhvamūlaṃ' (root above).

The term 'Mūla' stands for the root or the base. The universe is born of Him and is preserved by Him. He is eternal, infinite and the base of the entire creation. He resides in His eternal abode, which is situated above all the worlds in His manifested form with attributes. So He is known as 'Ūrdhva'. This world is born of Him and therefore it is called 'Ūrdhvamūla' having its root above.

As trunks, branches and tendrils sprout from the root of the tree, so does the entire universe emanate from God. It is expanded by Him, it remains established in Him and it is by His power that beings act ‡. Having taken refuge in such Lord a person is satisfied for ever (The Lord talks of taking refuge in Him in the fourth verse).

At the time of creation Brahmā, the creator accepts Prakṛti but he remains liberated from it as he has no attachment to it. Except Brahmā all the other beings having affinity of 'I'ness and 'mineness' for Prakṛti (nature) and its evolute body etc., are bound and take birth and then die again and again i.e., their branches spread downward. The three kinds of birth because of the three modes of goodness, of passion and of ignorance are included in the expression 'Adhaḥśākham (Gītā 14/18).

'Aśvattham'—The term 'Aśvattham' has two meanings — (1) That which may not last even by tomorrow i.e., kaleidoscopic§ and (2) Peepul tree.

According to the first interpretation the universe does not remain fixed even for a 'Kṣaṇa'× (moment), it is kaleidoscopic, the seen is changing into the unseen. It seems to exist like a mirage. The mere change

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* The expression 'Adhaḥśākham' includes all creatures from Brahmā to insects.

† No one appears either to be superior or equal to Him (God).

‡ This fact has been mentioned in the Gītā when Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, "I am the source and dissolution of the entire universe" (7/6), "I am the origin, the dissolution, the formation, the treasure house and the imperishable seed of the universe (9/18), "I am the source of all; from Me everything evolves" (9/10), "The ancient activity or energy streamed forth from Him" (15/4), "From Him all beings have evolved" (18/46).

§ The term 'Śvaḥ' stands for tomorrow. That which continues by tomorrow is 'Śvattha' and that which does not last even by tomorrow is 'Aśvattha'.

× The philosophers have explained the term 'Kṣaṇa' (moment) in the following way – a needle pricks the lotus leaf in three moments-touch in the first moment, making the hole in the second moment, and passing the other side of the leaf in the third moment.

appears as creation or existence or dissolution. It is because of its kaleidoscopic nature that it is called 'Aśvattham'.

According to the second interpretetion the universe has been called the peepul tree. In the scriptures this tree has been glorified very much. The Lord declares while describing His divine manifestations 'Among all the trees I am the 'Aśvattha' (peepul)' (Gītā 10/26). If the plants of peepul, myrobalan and basil are worshipped by regarding them as God, the worship becomes worship to God.

God is the root of the universe and therefore this peepul tree in the form of the universe being manifestation of God deserves to be worshipped. The worship to this peepul tree in the form of the universe is to render service to it without having any desire to derive pleasure out of it. This world is the manifestation of God for those who don't desire to derive pleasure out of it—'The supreme is all' (Gītā 7/19). But this world is the abode of sorrows for those who desire to derive pleasure out of it because they (the self) are imperishable while the world is perishable or transitory or kaleidoscopic. Therefore the objects of the world can't satisfy the self and the people have to follow the cycle of birth and death. So everyone should render service to the world without expecting any reward from it.

'Prāhuravyayam'—This tree in the form of the world is called imperishable because in spite of being perishable, its beginning and end are not known, its flow is continuous (eternal) and its root is imperishable God. As the water of the sea evaporates with the heat of the sun, changes into a cloud, falls on the ground in the form of rain and flows into the sea again in the form of a stream or a river and the process continues endlessly, so does the cycle of the world go on without any end. This cycle moves so rapidly that just like a movie in spite of being kaleidoscopic it seems fixed.

This tree in the form of this world is called imperishable but in fact it is not so. Had it been imperishable, the Lord in the third verse of this chapter would have not declared, "Its form is not perceived here, as is said" nor He would have inspired Arjuna to cut off this firm rooted peepul tree with the strong axe of non-attachment.

'Chandāṁsi yasya parṇāni' —The Vedas are the leaves of this tree in the form of universe. Here the Vedas mean the portion of the Vedas which deal with the actions and their performance for their fruits. * As trees with flowers and leaves without bearing any fruits can't satisfy persons, so can the mundane pleasure and prosperity, looking beautiful outwardly like flowers and leaves, not provide imperishable bliss.

The virtuous actions performed in order to attain heaven are better than forbidden actions but they can't lead to salvation because those people having enjoyed the vast heaven, enter the world of mortals when their merit is exhausted (Gītā 9/21). Thus such actions and their fruits—both are perishable. Therefore a striver should realize God by becoming detached from both of them.

Leaves are born of the branches of a tree and they protect and nourish it. They beautify it and strengthen it (The movement of leaves strengthen its root, stem and branches). The Vedas are also born of Brahmā, the main branch of this tree in the form of the world and actions sanctioned by the Vedas nourish and protect the world. So the Vedas have been called leaves. When actions are performed with a desire for fruit, they lead him to heaven. This is nourishment of this tree. In heaven there are celestial damsels and garden etc. This is beauty of that tree.

* In the Vedas the number of the hymns which deal with the fruit of actions is eighty thousand while the number of the hymns which lead to salvation is twenty thousand. Out of these twenty thousand hymns there are four thousand of the path of knowledge and sixteen thousand of the path of devotion.

The performance of actions for their fruit leads to the cycle of birth and death — this is strengthening of this tree.

Here the Lord means to say that a striver, instead of getting entangled in the leaves in the form of the performance of actions for their fruit, should depend only on God, the root of the tree. Having depended on God he realizes the reality about the Vedas which deal with the Supreme Being rather than the world or heaven (Gītā 15/15).*

'Yastam veda sa vedavit'—He who knows this tree in the form of the universe, knows the reality about the Vedas. The real knowledge of the world consists in knowing the world as kaleidoscopic and also having no desire of deriving any pleasure out of it. When a man realizes that the world is transitory (unreal), he can't derive any pleasure out of it. While enjoying the sense-objects he does not realize the world to be transitory. A man depends on the world and has a desire to derive pleasure out of it only by regarding the worldly beings and objects as real. When he realizes the reality, he has a disinclination for the world and an inclination to God, and he realizes his identity with God. Such a person is the knower of the Vedas. The person who has only studied the Vedas, may be a scholar, but he has not really known the Vedas. The real knower of the Vedas is he who having renounced his affinity for the world, has realized God.

The Lord in the fifteenth verse of this chapter has declared that He is the knower of the Vedas. Thus the Lord identifies such a man, who knows the reality about the world, with Him by calling him the knower of the Vedas. It means that discrimination bestowed upon human beings is so glorious that a person having known the reality about the world can become the knower of the Vedas like God†.

The man (soul) being a fragment of God has his only affinity for God. He has assumed his affinity for the world by an error. He who through discrimination having rectified this error i.e., having renounced his assumed affinity for the world, has realized his self-evident identity with God, knows the reality about the tree in the form of the world and he has been called 'Vedavit' (the knower of the Vedas) by the Lord.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse describes the tree of creation, described in the preceding verse, in more detail with its parts.

अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्य शाखा
गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालाः ।
अधश्च मूलान्यनुसंततानि
कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥ २ ॥

adhaścordhvam prasṛtāstasya śākhā
guṇapravṛddhā viṣayapravālāḥ
adhaśca mūlānyanusantatāni
karmānubandhīni manuṣyaloke

Its branches extend below and above, nourished by the modes, with sense-objects for its buds (twigs) and below in the world of men stretch forth the roots which bind the soul according to Its action. 2

Comment:

'Tasya śākhā guṇapravṛddhāḥ'—Brahmā is the main branch of the tree of creation. All beings such as the gods, men and other lower species are born of Brahmā, the Creator. So all the worlds from the

* The Vedas ascertain the supreme person Who is the supreme goal.

† The same fact has been pointed out by the Lord when He declares, "They have attained unity with Me" (Gītā 14/2).

abode of Brahmā down to the nethermost-region and all the beings such as the gods, persons and germs etc., living in them are the branches of that tree of creation. As the branches of trees spread when they are watered, so do the branches of creation spread by attachment to the modes which is responsible for one's birth in good, medium and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21; 14/18). In the entire creation there is no place, object or person that is free from the three modes of nature (Gītā 18/40). It is because of attachment to the modes that the world seems to exist. The modes can be experienced by inclinations and objects born of the modes. Therefore the Lord by using the expression 'Guṇapravṛddhāḥ' wants to explain that so long as a man is attached to the modes in the least, the branches of the tree of creation will go on extending. So in order to cut off this tree, a striver should not be at all attached to the modes otherwise he can't renounce his attachment to the world.

'Viṣayapravālāḥ'—From the inclinations of the modes to the all seen objects are included in 'Viṣayapravālāḥ' (sense-objects as buds). As stem sprouts from the root, branches sprout from the stem and buds sprout from the branches and again branches extend from buds, so are sense-objects, the buds of this tree of universe. A person thinks of the sense-objects because of the three modes. As water in the form of modes nourishes and extends the branches of the tree of creation, so does it nourish and extend the buds of sense-objects. As buds are seen but water which pervades them is not seen, so are the objects of the senses with their characteristics of sound etc., seen but the modes are not seen, they are known by the sense-objects.

The expression 'Viṣayapravālāḥ' means that a man can't renounce attachment to the world so long as he thinks of the sense-objects (Gītā 2/62-63). "Thinking of whatever being a person at the end gives up his body to that being does he attain" (Gītā 8/6). So if he thinks of the sense-objects, the thought will lead him to bondage.

Like buds sense-objects also appear beautiful. So a man is attracted to them. A striver by applying his discrimination can easily renounce those objects by knowing them as transitory and sources of sorrow (Gītā 5/22). It is because of attachment to them that they appear beautiful and attractive; in fact they are not so. Therefore renouncement of attachment to them is the real renouncement. As a person has not to work hard in destroying the soft buds, so should a striver not think it difficult to renounce these sense-objects. They are just like poisonous sweet-dishes which may appear sweet and attractive but are deadly.* So a striver should totally renounce thinking of the sense-objects and enjoying them in order to cut off this tree of creation.†

'Adhaścordhvaṁ prasṛtā'—Here the term 'Ca' (and) should mean the middle world i.e., mortal, human world (as described by the expression 'Manuṣya loke karmānubandhīni' in this verse). The term 'Ūrdhvam' stands for the abode of Brahmā where one can go by two paths–the northern path (the path of light known as Devayāna) and the southern path (the path of darkness known as Pitṛyāna) described as light and dark paths in twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth verses of eighth chapter. The term 'Adhaḥ' stands for hells which are also of two kinds—by birth and by place.

This expression explains that the branches of the tree of creation having its root as God above extended in all directions below, above and in the middle. Out of them the main branch is this human life in which a human being is authorized to perform new actions while in other births he has to reap the fruit of his past actions. In human life he can either rise above (to upper region) or go below (to the lower region-hell) or even attain God, the highest state by cutting off the tree of creation. It depends upon him whether he attains God by attaching importance to discrimination or paves the way to hell by enjoying pleasures foolishly. Therefore saint Tulasīdāsa in the Mānasa declares, "This human life is a ladder either to hell or heaven or to attain salvation

* Sense-objects are more poisonous than a cobra because poison kills a man when it enters his body while sense-objects affect him when he merely sees them.

† If you want to attain salvation, you should renounce sense-objects from a distance regarding them as poisonous.

and it endows us with knowledge, dispassion and devotion which lead to benediction" (7/121/5).

'Adhaśca mūlānyanusantatāni karmānubandhīni manuṣyaloke'—All the other lives except human life are to reap the fruit of their past actions in the form of pleasure and pain. A man has to take birth in good and evil wombs in order to reap the fruit of his virtues and evil actions. In human life he can perform either virtuous or evil actions or may attain salvation by being free from virtues and evils.

Here the term 'Mūlāni' stands for the root in the form of identity, attachment and desire rather than for God. A man identifies the self with the body, is attached to body etc., and has desire for family, prosperity and name and fame etc. He wants his memorial even after giving up this mortal body. Other species also possess these desires to some extent but they bind a being in human life*. When a person performs actions inspired by desires, the impressions of these actions accumulate in his mind and conduce him to the cycle of birth and death. A man has to reap the fruit of the action performed during this life, here as well as hereafter (Gītā 18/12). So a man cannot be free from the bondage of actions so long as he has identity with the body and he is attached to the world and desires it. A striver has to cut off identity attachment and desire and has to depend on God Who is the creator and base of the universe. The same has been described in fourth verse of this chapter by the expression "I seek refuge in the Primal Person." As a man is bound in this human life, so can he be free in this human life in the same way as a knot can be untied at the point at which it is tied.

The roots of the tree of creation in the form of identity, attachment and desire extend below and above in all the worlds among all beings. Birds and beasts also have identity with their bodies, are attached to their offspring and have a desire to eat delicious food when hungry. Similarly the gods have identity with their divine bodies, are attached to heavenly pleasures and have a desire to aquire more and more pleasures. Thus all beings have identity, attachment and desire in one form or the other. But they don't bind other beings except man kind. Though other beings such as the gods etc., also possess discrimination, yet they don't use it because of the availability of pleasures in abundance and their enjoyment. So they can't realize that they (the self) are different from those defects; while a man can realize that he (the self) is different from or devoid of all such defects as identity, attachment and desire.

A man possesses the ability of having an eye on the fruit of the enjoyment of pleasures. The man who enjoys pleasures without thinking of their fruits is worse than a beast because a beast is paving the way to human life by reaping the fruit of its past actions while a man is paving the way to the birth in the womb of beasts by enjoying for bidden pleasures.

* These three (1) The desire to have a vision of God (God-Realization) or devotion to God (2) The desire for Self-Realization and (3) The desire to render service to others–are not desires because the self and God are ever attained and are one's own. As taking money from one's own pocket is not a theft, so is the desire for Self-Realization or God-Realization not a desire. Similarly the desire to use the worldly objects in rendering service to the world is renunciation rather than desire. The desire for attaining what is one's own and imperishable is a necessity (hunger) while the desire to give those objects, which are others' and perishable to them, is renunciation. As desire for food is a necessity for the body rather than a desire so is the desire of God to satisfy the hunger of the self not a desire. There is a desire for the insentient (Matter) while there is necessity (hunger) for the sentient. A desire is never satisfied, it is rather enhanced and so it is to be renounced while necessity is satisfied (fulfilled) by any one of the three paths—of action, of knowledge and of devotion. A man has become a slave to the world by regarding the worldly persons and objects as his. If he has the aim of using them in rendering service to others by regarding them as theirs he will be liberated from slavery (dependence)– This is the path of action. The soul is a fragment of God but It being attached to the perishable objects has deviated from Him. If a person renounces his attachment to the perishable persons and objects, he will realize the self—this is known as the path of knowledge. By having inclination to the world, he has a disinclination for God. If he accepts the fact that he is only God's and only God is his, devotion to God will be aroused in him – This is path of devotion. It means that a man being attached to the perishable world has become a slave to the world, has deviated from the self and has a disinclination for God. If he does not accept the world as his (which is not really his), he will cease to be a slave to the world, will realize the self and will attaion God-Realization or devotion to Him.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord explains the purpose of the description of the tree of creation mentioned in the preceding two verses.

न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते
नान्तो न चादिर्न च संप्रतिष्ठा ।
अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूल-
मसङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्त्वा ॥ ३ ॥

na rūpamasyeha tathopalabhyate
nānto na cādirna ca saṁpratiṣṭhā
aśvatthamenaṁ suvirūḍhamūla-
masaṅgaśastreṇa dṛḍhena chittvā

Its real form is not thus perceived here, neither its end nor its origin, nor its foundation (resting place); so having cut-off this firm-rooted peepul tree with the strong sword of non-attachment.

Comment:

'Na rūpamasyeha tathopalabhyate'—In the first verse of this chapter the tree of creation has been called imperishable and in the scriptures also it is mentioned that the persons who perform virtuous actions in order to reap their fruit, enjoy mundane and heavenly pleasures in abundance. Having heard such statements a person feels that the human world and paradise are pleasant and permanent. So he desires sense-objects and filled with insatiable desires he holds that there is nothing else beyond sensual enjoyments (Gītā 2/42; 16/11). An ignorant person has this feeling so long as he has identity, attachment and desire. But the Lord declares that when a striver perceives it by separating the self from the world i.e., by renouncing his affinity for it, he does not perceive it imperishable and pleasant but he perceives it perishable and unpleasant.

'Nānto na cādirna ca saṁpratiṣṭhā'—The world has neither its end nor origin nor foundation (middle) in space and time. As a person while visiting an exhibition being enamoured of its objects does not know its beginning and end without going out of it, so does a person not know the origin and end of the world by having attachment to it.

All the means (senses, mind and intellect) to perceive the origin and end of the world, are the fragments of the world. So they can't know the world in the same way as the jar of clay can't absorb the earth within it. Therefore when a man (the self) separates himself from the world (mind, intellect, sense) he knows the world in reality.

In fact the world has no independent existence. It is only the process of birth and death. This process appears as its existence. If a further thought is given to it, it will be experienced that there is no birth, there is only decay. When it does not stay in one form even for a moment, how can it be called existent ? It seems to exist because of a striver's attachment to the world. As soon as this attachment is renounced, the seemingly existence disappears and the striver realizes the self or God.

An Important Fact

Any scientist has neither perceived the beginning, the middle and the end of the universe till today, nor can he perceive it. If a person having attachment to the world and enjoying the mundane pleasures wants to perceive the beginning, middle and end of it all his efforts are in vain.

In fact there is no need to perceive the beginning, the middle and the end of this universe, there is need to renounce the

assumed affinity for it.

Philosophers differ in their opinions whether the universe is beginningless and perishable or beginningless and infinite or illusory but all of them agree that our affinity for it is unreal (assumed) which must be renounced.

An easy way to renounce this assumed affinity for the world is that the materials (mind, intellect, senses, body, riches and property etc.) acquired from the world should be used in rendering service to the world.

All the mundane materials such as women, sons, honour, praise, wealth, property, long age, good health and abundant pleasures can't satisfy a person because he (the self) is imperishable while all the mundane pleasures are perishable. How can the imperishable be satisfied by the perishable ?

'Aśvatthamenaṁ suvirūḍha-mūlam'—It is because of identity, attachment and desire that the universe (having no foundation) seems firm rooted.

Attachment to beings, objects and actions etc., strengthens the worldly bondage. Because of his attachment he identifies himself with them. Having possessed riches he thinks "I am very rich" and when his wealth is ruined he holds that he has been ruined. Out of greed he performs forbidden actions and commits sins in order to hoard money. Then he has a resolve that he can't earn money without foul means as falsehood, fraud and dishonesty etc. He ceases to think that the money earned by foul means will have to be left here while the evils such as false hood, fraud and dishonesty etc., will accompany him to the next world* and will lead him to a miserable life here as well as hereafter. Not only this but he also instigates other people to earn money by foul means calling it a business by justifying falsehood and fraud etc. This evil feeling (faith) is the firm root of the branches of identity, attachment and desire. This evil feeling (faith) makes him evil because the Lord declares, "What a man's faith is, that verily, he is" (Gītā 17/3).

The branches of identity, attachment and desire are so firmly rooted that they can't be totally rooted out through study of the scriptures, while listening to the divine discourses and thinking. Strivers while listening to the religious discourses think to renounce these evils but in practical life they find themselves unable to renounce them. The reason is that they want to renounce them along with deriving mundane pleasures from persons and objects etc., like the greedy person who wants to relish the sweet dish mixed with poison and also escape poison. But it is impossible. When a striver has no desire at all to derive any kind of pleasure from the world, this firm rooted tree of the universe is naturally rooted out.

Secondly, a striver holds that it is very difficult to get rid of these evils of identity, attachment and desire. But the fact is that these defects are automatically perishing, they can't stay as they are transient. So a striver should never think that it is difficult to renounce them.

'Asaṅgaśastreṇa dṛḍhena chittvā'—The Lord declares that though the tree of creation is firm rooted, it can be cut off with the strong sword (axe) of non-attachment. A man may be attached to a place, person, object or circumstance etc., because of their attraction and because of the desire to derive pleasure out of them. Absence of attachment is non-attachment or dispassion. This dispassion can be of two kinds (i) Common (ii) Strong. Strong dispassion is also called 'Uparati' (indifference) or 'Para vairāgya'.

An Important Fact Pertaining to Dispassion

A man may abandon his house and property physically but if he attaches importance to them from his heart or if he feels proud that he is a renouncer, it means that he is not dispassionate. When he has not the least attachment to them and has no attraction towards them—this is dispassion.

* When a person gives up his body, the wealth remains lying in shelves, animals remain tied here and there, his wife accompanies him to the gate, sons go upto the cremation ground, the body to the pyre while it is only one's righteousness (Dharma) which accompanies him to the next world.

Secondly, he should be detached from the so-called his parents, wife, sons, brothers and friends etc. He should accept his affinity for them in order to render service to them rather than to have a desire to acquire anything from them for his selfish motive.

Thirdly there is detachment from the body. This is real detachment. If there is attachment to the body, it means that there is attachment to the entire universe because the body is the seed of the entire universe. Absence of identification with the body is detachment (dispassion) from the body.

In order to renounce this identity with the body (egoism) first a striver should renounce the desire for honour, praise and riches etc. Even when a striver renounces the desire for honour, praise and fame etc., here because of his subtle desire he wants his name and fame to be maintained through memorials etc., after the death of the body. All these desires must be renounced. Sometimes a striver is envious or jealous of others which should also be renounced.

. Even when these desires are renounced, a man remains attached to his body even after he has given up the body. So the bones of the dead body are put into the Ganges after the body is burnt so that he may meet with a good fate. When a man through discrimination realizes that the sentient soul is different from the insentient body, his attachment or the sense of 'mine' is renounced. When both desire and attachment are renounced, identity (egoism) almost perishes i.e., it remains only in its subtle form. It totally perishes when a devotee attains God-Realization or real exclusive devotion to God.

When a man realizes 'I am neither body nor the body is mine', desire, attachment and identity — the three perish. This is real detachment or dispassion.

All the desires (lusts) perish from the heart of the striver who is dispassionate from within. A devotee possessing strong dispassion having no affinity for the insentient objects such as the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., wishes everyone to be happy, free from diseases and sufferings and to attain benediction.

'I' is the knower and the onlooker while the entire universe including the gross, subtle and causal bodies is to be known and seen. 'I' is imperishable while the universe and the body are perishable. He who realizes this distinction, cuts off this tree of creation with the strong axe of non-attachment. When a man does not attach importance to this discrimination, the tree of creation seems to be firm-rooted.

The worldly objects can't be totally destroyed but attachment to them can be totally renounced. This detachment is known as the cutting off this tree.

The universe ceases to be when attachment to it is renounced. Only the thing or person, we have no real affinity for, can be renounced (cut off). A man (the self) is sentient and imperishable while the universe is insentient and perishable. So his affinity for the universe is unreal, it is assumed by an error. He who is really detached gets detached. We should accept the fact that we have no attachment to the universe. How so ever firm-rooted the world may be, if we don't accept our affinity for it, it is naturally cut off, because this affinity is merely assumed. So a striver should doubtlessly believe that he has no affinity at all for the world even though he may not perceive it in practical life.

A man himself has accepted this affinity for the body and the world. So it is his responsibility to cut it off. Therefore the Lord is exhorting us to cut it off.

Some Easy Means of Renouncing This Affinity for the World

(1) Render service to the world with the material acquired from the world without any selfish motive.
(2) Renounce desire for mundane pleasures and prosperity.
(3) Renounce dependence on the world totally.
(4) Renounce the sense of 'I' and 'mine' with the body and the world.
(5) Stick firmly to the reality, "I am God's; God is mine."
(6) Have a resolve "I have to realize God."
(7) Perform your duty sanctioned by the

scriptures scrupulously (Gītā 18/45).
(8) Attach importance to your own experience that your body, circumstances, strength, ability etc., are not the same as they were in your childhood, they have all changed while you are the same.
(9) Don't accept your assumed affinity for the world.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord explains what a striver should do after cutting off the tree of creation.

ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं
यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।
तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये
यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी ॥ ४ ॥

tataḥ padaṁ tatparimārgitavyaṁ
yasmingatā na nivartanti bhūyaḥ
tameva cādyaṁ puruṣaṁ prapadye
yataḥ pravṛttiḥ prasṛtā purāṇī

Then that supreme goal (God) should be sought for, whither having reached none returns again, saying, "I seek refuge in that Primal Person whence has streamed forth this ancient current of the world." 4

Comment:

'Tataḥ padaṁ tatparimārgitavyam'—In the preceding verse the Lord talked of cutting off the tree of creation while here He is talking of seeking God. It proves that it is inevitable to renounce affinity for the world before seeking God. The reason is that He pervades equally every object, person, incident, circumstance etc., all the time but when a person accepts his affinity for the universe, he can't realize Him. The spiritual practice of chanting and study of the scriptures etc., does not prove much fruitful because of his affinity for the world. So a striver should attach first and foremost importance to the renouncement of affinity for the world.

The man (soul) (self) is a fragment of God but he forgets this eternal affinity for Him when he accepts his affinity for the world by an error. When this error is rectified, he gains recognition (memory) of the reality that he is God's. Therefore the Lord declares that he has had already his affinity for the supreme goal (God), only He is to be sought for.

When a striver accepts the world as his, the ever attained Lord seems to be unattained and the world which is never attained, seems to be attained. Therefore the Lord by using the term 'Tat' (that) exhorts Arjuna to seek Him Who is ever attained.

Only that is sought which already exists. God is beginningless and He pervades everywhere and so He is not to be sought by applying any particular means. But it means that a striver instead of depending on the world (body, family and wealth etc.) which is never his, should depend on God Who is ever his, Who is in him and Who exists even now. In this way a striver should seek Him.

A striver should perform spiritual practice certainly because there is no activity superior to it. But he should not think that God will be realized by spiritual practice because by thinking so he will be proud and pride is a stumbling block to God-Realization. He can be realized by His grace, He can't be bought by any means (spiritual practice). Spiritual practice roots out the evils of identity (with the body), attachment and desire for the world which are the obstacles to God-Realization. These obstacles have been created by the

striver himself. Therefore when a striver wants to root out these evils from his heart, by God's grace they are rooted out.

Generally strivers hold that God can be realized (through the purification of the mind) in the same way by making efforts as worldly objects are acquired. But in fact it is not so because even the most virtuous actions such as penance etc., also are transitory, they have a beginning and an end. So how can the perishable bear the imperishable fruit? Through penance and renunciation etc., the assumed affinity for Matter (the world and the body) is renounced. Having renounced this assumed affinity, ever-attained God Who ever pervades everywhere is realized—memory for him is aroused i.e., recognition is gained.

Having listened to the Lord's gospel Arjuna says, 'Recognition (memory) is gained' (Gītā 10/73). Though forgetfulness is also beginningless yet it can come to an end. There is a vast difference between the memory of the world and that of God. After the world's memory, forgetfulness is possible as a person suffering from paralysis can forget the knowledge which he had acquired through study. But if God's memory is once gained, there is never forgetfulness (Gītā 2/72, 4/35) as even while suffering from paralysis he never forgets his existence (I am), because he can never have his real affinity for the world and his real affinity for God can never be renounced.

He who has realized the fact that he has no affinity for the body and the world has infact cut off this tree of creation; and he who has realized the truth that he (the self) is a fragment of God, has sought God. As soon as a striver renounces his affinity for the world, he realizes (attains) God Who is ever attained.

'Yasmingatā na nivartanti bhūyaḥ'—The term 'Yasmin' used here stands for God Who has been described in the first verse by the expression 'Ūrdhvamūlam' (root above) and in this verse by the expression 'Ādyaṁ puruṣam' (Primal Person) and Who is going to be described in more detail in the sixth verse ahead.

As a drop of water after merging in the ocean cannot be separated from it, so can the soul (the self), a fragment of God, having attained God cannot be separated from Him i.e., from His abode there is no return. It is attachment to nature or to its modes which is the cause of the soul's birth in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21). Therefore, when a striver cuts off the attachment to the modes with the strong axe of non-attachment, no question arises of his rebirth anywhere.

'Yataḥ pravṛttiḥ prasṛtā purāṇī'—God is the creator of the entire universe (creation) and also its base and illuminator. A man out of delusion is attracted towards the world created by Him because of its sensual pleasures and forgets the creator. When the world created by God seems so charming and loving, how charming and loving should He be? Though in the world created by Him the attraction towards the world is in fact attraction to Him because it is a manifestation of His fragment (Gītā 10/41) yet out of ignorance a person holds that there is attraction because of the glory of the world rather than that of God and so he gets entangled in the world.

Every being's nature is that (it or) he depends upon the object or person etc., he considers superior to others and from which he expects to receive some fruit. The worldly people hanker after wealth because they think that they can acquire all the necessites as well as luxuries of life and also honour and praise etc., by money (wealth). So they don't hesitate in committing sins and doing injustice in earning money. They even don't give proper rest to their bodies because they remain engaged in earning money which according to them is superior to all other attainments. Similarly when a striver comes to know that God is the Supreme Being and having realized Him one attains such a bliss which is superior to all mundane pleasures, all the sensual pleasures become insipid before that bliss (Gītā 6/22) and then he starts worshipping Him with all his being (heart) (Gītā 15/19).

'Tameva cādyaṁ puruṣaṁ prapadye'—A striver should seek refuge in the Primal Person Who is the source of all beings (Gītā 10/2). If he takes refuge in other

perishable worldly persons and objects, they will devour (ruin) him in the same way as a crocodile devours a person who takes refuge in it. Therefore he should take refuge only in the imperishable Lord rather than in the perishable world.

When a striver fails in getting rid of his defects by applying all his power, he gets disappointed. In such circumstances if he seeks refuge only in God, by His grace he totally becomes free from evils and realizes Him. Therefore a striver should never lose heart as far as God-Realization is concerned. Having taken refuge in Him he should become free from all fears and worries because by doing so, by His grace all obstacles are overcome and God is realized (Gītā 18/58, 62).

As a striver has to renounce attachment to the world, so has he to renounce attachment to non-attachment because by being detached he may have egoism in its subtle form by thinking "I am detached." But when he takes refuge in Him, this subtle egoism can perish easily. When he seeks refuge in Him, he surrenders the so-called his body, senses, mind, intellect, egoism, ('I'ness) riches, property and family to Him i.e., he has no sense of possession over them.

The devotee who takes refuge in God thinks 'I am God's and 'I am for Him' and 'God is mine' and 'He is for me.' Out of these two thoughts the former 'I am God's and for Him' is superior to the latter because in the former thought he has no desire of his own, he remains satisfied and happy with God's will. So he desires neither to do nor to acquire any thing for himself. In this way his undefinable and singular devotion to God is aroused. In the devotion there is limitless bliss and it provides bliss even to God Who is the store of bliss. In this devotion meeting with the Lord does not satisfy the devotee, this devotion does not decrease in separation but it is enhanced every moment. The devotion (love) which is attained after Self-Realization is also attained through surrender (refuge).

The term 'Eva' means total dependence on God only, having renounced all other supports. The same idea has been expressed in the Gītā in the expression. "Those who take refuge in Me alone" (7/14), "Seek refuge in Him alone" (18/62) and "Take refuge in Me alone" (18/66).

The term 'Prapadye' means 'I seek refuge.' Here a doubt may arise whether the Lord also seeks refuge and in whom He seeks refuge. The clarification is that the Lord does not seek refuge in any one because He is the Supreme Lord of the entire creation. In order to set an example to the people He explains it to a striver by speaking in his language that he should think, "I take refuge."

God and the self both exist everywhere. When the self assumes Its affinity for the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., there can't be unswerving devotion or total surrender to God. Being a fragment of God the self ever depends on God, but by an error It having a disinclination for God depends on the perishable world. So It has to suffer because of Its dependence on the perishable. Therefore a striver having realized his true affinity for God depends only on Him i.e., seeks refuge only in Him.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse points out the marks of those devotees who attain the supreme goal (God) by taking refuge in the Primal Being (God).

निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा
अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः ।
द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसंज्ञै-
र्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥ ५ ॥

nirmānamohā jitasaṅgadoṣā
adhyātmanityā vinivṛttakāmāḥ
dvandvairvimuktāḥ sukhaduḥkhasaṁjñair-
gacchantyamūḍhāḥ padamavyayaṁ tat

Free from pride (honour) and delusion, victorious over the evil ensuing from attachment, dwelling constantly in the self or God, their desires completely stilled, liberated from the dualities (known as pleasure and pain), the undeluded reach the Eternal Goal. 5

Comment:

'Nirmānamohā'—When a person has the sense of 'I' and 'mine' in the body, he has a desire to win honour (respect) etc. He, by identifying the self with the body, regards the honour of the body as honour of the self and gets entangled. But those devotees who regard only God as theirs, have no sense of egoism and possession in the body and so they don't get pleased by honour (respect) of the body. Having taken refuge only in God, they are not attached to the body and so they have no desire for honour (respect).

Having the only aim of God-Realization and by depending on God only, those devotees develop a disinclination for the world. They become detached from the world. So they become free from worldly delusion.

'Jitasṅgadoṣā'—Attraction towards God is called devotion (love) and attraction towards the world is called attachment. It is because of attachment that evils such as the sense of possession, desire, lust and hope etc., spring. It is by taking refuge in God that a striver gets victory over all these evils.

A man can be attached to both the objects acquired as well unacquired. But there is desire only for the unacquired ones. So the expression 'Vinivṛttakāmāḥ' (desires completely stilled) has been given separately.

'Adhyātmanityāḥ'—When a devotee takes refuge in God, his egoism changes* He holds that he is God's not of the world. Thus he constantly dwells in Him. As a person according to his birth accepts that he is a Brāhmaṇa or Vaiśya and he always remains established in it even without remembering it, so do the devotees, who accept their affinity for God, always dwell in him.

'Vinivṛttakāmāḥ'—A man desires mundane objects and favourable circumstances only when he aims at mundane pleasures and prosperity. But those devotees whose aim is not to acquire mundane objects become totally free from desires.

It is attachment to the body which gives birth to desires. When a man is attached to the body, he wants it to be healthy and strong. So is the case with other mundane objects and riches etc. As a devotee is not attached to the body and the world, all his desires are stilled. He holds that the so-called his body, senses, mind, intellect and egoism ('I'ness) are only God's and only God is his. The desires of such a devotee are totally stilled.

An Important Fact

In fact this body is constantly decaying (perishing). A striver has to accept this reality in a practical way. All desires are born of having contact with the perishable objects such as body etc. One day this process of decay will be over and then it will be said that the body has decayed (died). But actually the body has not died today. The process of constant decay has completed today. Therefore in order to be free from desires, a striver should realize this fact that the mundane objects such as the body etc., are not his because they are transient while he (the self) is permanent and eternal.

In fact desires are never satisfied. When a desire seems to be satisfied another desire appears and so a person tries to satisfy that

* Though all beings constantly dwell in the omnipresent Lord Who is the illuminator of the entire creation yet they by an error assume that they dwell in the world as "I belong to a particular caste or creed or sect etc." It is because of this contrary assumption (belief) that they are bound and are born in good and evil wombs.

self. The mind is insentient while the self is sentient and illuminator of the insentient. Therefore the self has no affinity for the mind, this affinity is merely assumed.

Everybody knows that he remains the same in the pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain etc. But out of delusion by identifying the self with them he becomes happy and sad. If he remains established in the self which ever remains the same, without assuming that the pairs of opposites (Such as pleasure and pain) are in him, he will be liberated from the duality of pleasure and pain etc.

The Lord has pointed out an easy way to be liberated from the dualities of attachment and aversion etc., by declaring "Attachment and aversion for the objects of the senses abide in the senses; let none come under their sway" (Gītā 3/34). It means that a striver should not act by coming under their sway because they are strengthened by doing so.

'Gacchantyamūḍhāḥ padamavyayam tat'—He who desires the perishable objects, who makes efforts to acquire them and feels happy or sad by acquiring them or without acquiring them, is deluded. In fact the world is kaleidoscopic while God is eternal and it is because of His light that the world seems to exist. He who accepts the existence of the world is deluded.

As the deluded person perceives the world clearly, so does the undeluded great-soul perceive God clearly. He who accepts the existence of the world, is deluded while he who accepts it as kaleidoscopic is undeluded. The undeluded one is not affected by pleasure and pain and he who remains the same in pleasure and pain is fit for attaining Immortality (Gītā 2/15). Therefore here in this verse the Lord has laid emphasis two times on the renouncement of delusion by using the expression 'Nirmānamohāḥ' and also the term 'Amūḍhāḥ'.

Delusion can be of two kinds (1) inclination to the world rather than to God (2) not to know the reality about God. In this verse the expression 'Nirmānamohāḥ' stands for freedom from delusion of the world while the term 'Amūḍhāḥ'* stands for the true knowledge about God.

God Who has been mentioned by the expression 'Ūrdhvamūlam' (root above) in the first verse, Who has been called the Supreme Goal which should be sought in the fourth verse and Who has been glorified in the sixth verse, has been called here 'Avyayam padam' (the Eternal Goal). The strivers who have become totally free from evils such as honour, delusion and attachment etc., attain the Eternal Goal from where there is no return.

In fact that Eternal Goal is naturally attained to every human being but a man does not realize this fact because he has turned his eye from that Goal (God). It can be explained by an illustration. When our train stops at a station and other train suddenly starts moving, we feel as if our train has started moving. But we come to know the reality when we look at the station. Similarly when a person is attached to the world, he finds himself moving (kaleidoscopic). But when he looks at the self he realizes that he (the self) is the same (uniform), it is not kaleidoscopic.

Link:—The Lord in the next verse describes the characteristics of the Eternal Goal (Abode) Which is attained by the devotees as described in the preceding verse.

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।
यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ ६ ॥

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* As the devotee who knows attributeless God becomes undeluded (5/20) so does the devotee who worships the Lord endowed with attributes and form also becomes undeluded (10/3; 15/19).

na tadbhāsayate sūryo na śaśāṅko na pāvakaḥ
yadgatvā na nivartante taddhāma paramaṁ mama

Neither doth the sun illumine that (Eternal Goal) nor the moon, nor the fire; having gone thither they (who reach there) return not; that is My Supreme Abode. 6

Comment:

[The sixth verse is the link between the fifth verse and the seventh verse. In this verse the Lord declares that the Eternal Goal is His Abode Which has identity with Him in the same way as His fragment, the soul has identity with Him. Therefore the soul has also identity with that Abode (Eternal Goal) i.e., the soul has eternal union with that Abode.

Though this verse is closely related with the twelfth verse, yet it has been given here to link the fifth and the seventh verses. In this verse the Lord mentions two important factors — (1) The sun can't illumine that Abode (The Lord has described the light of that Abode which illumines the entire world in the twelfth verse) and (2) Those who reach His abode don't return to the world (the cause has been explained by the Lord in the seventh verse of this chapter)].

'Na tadbhāsayate sūryo na śaśāṅko na pāvakaḥ'—When even the sun which illumines the entire universe does not illumine that Supreme Abode, how can the moon and the fire illumine that? The Lord in the twelfth verse of this chapter will declare, "That light of the sun which illumines the world, that which is in the moon and in the fire—know that light to be Mine."

So how can the sun, the moon and the fire illumine the Supreme Abode (God) when they receive light from Him?* It means that God is sentient while the sun, the moon and the fire are insentient (Matter) and these three illumine respectively the eye, the mind and the speech which are also insentient. So God can neither be seen with eyes, nor be thought of with mind nor be described in words. How can the sentient (God) be illumined by the insentient? God the illuminator pervades all of them without being proud of His illuminating light.

The self being a fragment of God is also an embodiment of that light and therefore it can also not be illumined by the insentient objects (mind, intellect and senses etc.). These objects should be utilized to render service to others in order to renounce affinity for them.

Here a point needs attention that the sun has not been regarded here as sun-god or a god but as the source of light. It means that the sun is superior to other sources of light and so there is mention of the moon and fire also in the same way as He has mentioned (in Gītā 10/37) Himself as Vāsudeva, a noble person among the Vṛṣṇis (Yādavas, the descendents of Yadu) rather than as Lord Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa).

'Yadgatvā na nivartante taddhāma paramaṁ mama'—The self is a fragment of God. So long as it does not attain God, it can't be liberated from the cycle of birth and death. It attains real and permanent peace only when it attains God Whose fragment It is, in the same way as water of rivers gets fixed after merging in the ocean whose fragment it is. In fact the self has its identity with God but because of Its attachment (which is assumed) it has to take birth in good and evil wombs.

Here the term 'Paramadhāma' stands both for the abode of God as well as for God. This Supreme Abode is the embodiment of light. As the sun in spite of remaining fixed at its particular position, pervades

* (1) When neither the sun illumines that God, nor do the moon, the stars and the electricity illumine Him, how will fire illumine Him? This entire universe is illumined by that God.

(2) Lord Rāma is the illuminator Who illuminates the universe (Mānasa 1/117/4).

everywhere in the form of light i.e., the sun and its light are one and the same, so are the Supreme Abode and all-pervading God one and the same.

According to the beliefs of the devotees the same Supreme Abode which is sentient, embodiment of knowledge, embodiment of light and embodiment of God, is known by different names as Brahmaloka, Sāketaloka, Goloka, Devīdvīpa, and Śivaloka etc.

This imperishable Supreme Goal pervades everyone in the form of the self. So all of us dwell in that Supreme Goal but we don't realize this fact because of our identity with and attachment and desire for the insentient (body etc.).

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord declared, "That is My Supreme Abode from which those who reach it never return." Now in the next verse He explains why the soul, Which is a fragment of God and Which (like the Supreme Abode) has identity with Him, is unable to realize Him.

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः।
मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥ ७ ॥

mamaivāṁśo jīvaloke jīvabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ
manaḥṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛtisthāni karṣati

A fragment of My own self having become a living soul eternal, in the world of life, draws to itself the (five) senses with the mind for the sixth, abiding in Nature. 7

Comment:

'Mamaivāṁśo jīvaloke jīvabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ'—The term 'Loka' stands for Nature and its evolutes which have no identity with the soul (self). The term 'Jīvaloke' stands for all the bodies, in the three worlds and the entire universe, which the soul acquires.

The soul is a fragment of God but having assumed Its affinity for the body, senses, mind and life breath etc., which are the evolutes of Nature, It has become the embodied-soul—'Jīvabhūtaḥ' which is artificial, not real, like an actor in a play.

The Lord in the seventh chapter declared, "This world is upheld by My higher Nature which is the soul" (7/5) i.e., though the soul has no real affinity for the lower Nature (world), yet It has assumed its affinity for it.

As the soul is a fragment of God, so He always thinks of Its welfare. As a lion-cub having joined the flock of sheep considers that he is a sheep not a lion-cub, though even by mixing with them, he is converted into a sheep, so does the soul identifying Itself with the body etc., forget Its real identity. As a lion makes the lion-cub aware of his identity by showing him that he is the same in shape, nature and roar etc., as is the former, so does the Lord make the man (soul) aware that he is His fragment, having no affinity for Nature. He had neither any affinity with Nature in the past, nor will have in future nor he can have any time.

Out of all the means (disciplines) of God-Realization, the means of changing 'egoism' ('I' ness) and 'sense of possession (mineness)' is easy and good. A striver's egoism and sense of possession decide his feelings and actions. A striver should hold that he is only God's and only God is his.

Everyone knows that a person acts according to his caste, creed and order of life. But this assumption that he is a Brāhmaṇa or an ascetic is a temporary phase of life in order to perform his duty like an actor in a play. But a man (soul) is a fragment of God—this is a permanent reality. He regards the mind, senses, intellect, body, riches and property as his own by an error but they never regard him as theirs while

God, the creator of the entire universe declares that the soul is His fragment.

What a blunder we commit when we regard the objects such as the body etc., as ours! Can we change them as we desire? Can we possess them so long as we desire? Can we maintain them and carry them with us?

My mind, intellect, senses and body are different today from what they were in childhood while I am the same without undergoing any change. He who perceives changes, himself remains changeless. Worldly objects and persons are not my lasting companions. I am the onlooker of the changing scenes.

When a striver holds 'I am God's, it means that he is absorbed in God. A striver commits an error that he instead of getting the self absorbed in God, tries ,to engage his mind and intellect in Him. So he finds it difficult to control his mind and it takes a lot of time. So long as a striver having forgotten the fact 'I am God's assumes 'I am a Brāhmaṇa or an ascetic' and tries to engage his mind and intellect in God, he will not be so much successful as he can be when he accepts the fact 'I am God's.' Therefore when the Lord in the fourth verse of this chapter exhorts Arjuna to seek refuge in Him, He means to say that the self should be engaged in Him. Gosvamī Tulasīdāsa also declares, "If a person by becoming God's follows the spiritual practice such as name chanting etc., his spoiled life of innumerable births can be improved today and even now" (Dohāvalī 22).

It means that if a striver himself gets absorbed in Him, his mind and intellect get easily absorbed in Him. As Meghanāda, while declaring that he is the son of Rāvaṇa in a play and also performing his part scrupulously, from within holds that he is not Meghanāda, so should a striver, while performing his duties on the stage of this world, hold that he is God's not of the world.

The embodied soul has been of God since time immemorial. God has never abandoned it nor has had a disinclination for it. The soul can also not renounce Him but It having misused Its freedom has developed a disinclination for God by an error. As ornaments made of gold can't be separate from gold, so can the embodied soul never be separate from God.

The so-called wise man commits a blunder that he has a disinclination for God Whose fragment he is. He does not pay attention to the fact that God being a disinterested friend of all beings is very benevolent and noble and His benevolence and love is beyond description. So it is an utter folly on his part to regard the perishable objects as his, by renouncing the all-benevolent and all-merciful Lord.

When a man performs his duty by obeying Him, He liberates him from the bondage of birth and death for ever. But if he performs forbidden actions, He warns him that he is suffering because of his past evil actions and so he should not perform forbidden actions again. Moreover He purifies him of his past sins by enabling him to reap the fruit of his past actions.

God regards a man (the soul) as His fragment whether he is in hell or in heaven, in human-womb (life) or in animal-womb. How benevolent, generous and great He is that seeing the downfall of men, feeling sad, He declares that being qualified and deserving to attain Him they don't attain Him but go down to the lowest state (Gītā 16/20).

God attracts him towards Him in all circumstances by creating pleasant and unpleasant, favourable and unfavourable circumstances. So a striver should ever remain pleased and satisfied by thinking of His grace because it is He Who does not let him remain in the same condition for ever otherwise he may forget Him.

It is not at all difficult for a man (the self) being a fragment of God, to realize Him. It is because of his disinclination for Him and inclination to the mundane objects such as the body etc., that he feels it difficult to attain Him quickly. He is already attained. As soon as a striver has an inclination to Him by having a disinclination for the world, he realizes Him. It is not an adventure on his part to acquire mundane riches and property etc., because all of them are perishable. But it is an adventure to realize God Who is imperishable and eternal.

The more importance a man attaches to the perishable objects, the more down-fall he has, but the more importance he attaches to the imperishable Lord, the higher he rises because he is a fragment of God.

A man can never attain greatness by acquiring the perishable mundane materials, though by an error of judgment he may think so. But in fact by thinking so he is deprived of the real greatness (God-Realization). The greatness attained by acquiring mundane materials is unreal and transient while the greatness attained by God-Realization is real and eternal. Even the gods honour such a God-Realized soul and desire his arrival to their abode. Not only this but even God lives under his control.

'Manaḥṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛti-sthāni karṣati'—The soul being a fragment of God ever abides in Him while the senses and mind being fragment of Prakṛti (Nature) ever abide in it. But the self regards the mind and senses as Its own and it is Its drawing the mind and senses.

Here the term 'Mana' stands both for the mind and the intellect. Similarly the five organs of action and the five life-breaths should also be included in the five senses. The Lord declares that the soul being His fragment and abiding in Him, by an error regards It as abiding in body, mind and senses and forgets Its real abode. But actually It can never be separate from Him.

The Lord mentions the five senses and the mind in order to point out the fact that a man (the soul) by being attached to the senses and mind is bound. Therefore a striver should surrender the body, senses, mind and intellect to the world by rendering service with them to the world and surrender himself to God.

An Important Fact

(1)

A man feels unhappy because by an error he regards the body, family, property, honour and praise as his and for him. Moreover it is very mean of him that he regards himself as great because of prosperity and pleasures while he becomes a slave to them. In fact the objects, which we regard as necessities of life and to which we attach importance, become superior to us whether we know or we don't know that fact.

But if a person becomes a slave to God, God becomes his slave and makes him the jewel of His crown. But the mundane objects never make any one the jewel of their crown even when he becomes a very devoted slave to them. In fact he becomes great by taking refuge in Him. About such a devotee the Lord declares, "O twice born, I am not independent, I depend on My devotees. They are very loving to Me, they have a full possession over My heart" (Śrīmadbhā. 9/4/63). Can the mundane persons and objects attach so much of importance to us? Never.

This man (soul), in spite of being a fragment of God being attached to Prakṛti (Nature) has a downfall. If he does not become a slave to the mundane objects such as the body, senses and mind etc., by depending on them, he becomes dearly adored (beloved) of Him (Gītā 18/64). The Lord calls those devotees who have attained Him, dear to him (Gītā 12/13-19) while He calls the strivers who have not attained Him but want to attain him exceedingly dear to him (Gītā 12/20). How stupid it is of the man who does not regard the most benevolent Lord, Who calls the strivers exceedingly dear and the enlightened souls only dear, as his !

(2)

The body is a fragment of the world while the self (soul) is a fragment of God. A striver commits an error that he in spite of being a fragment of God, gets attached to the world and wants the world as well as God to be favourable to him. He should rectify this error. It can be rectified by moulding himself according to God. It means that he should leave the body at the will of the world and leave the self at the will of God.

Offering the gift of the world to the world and offering the gift of God to God, is honesty. This honesty is called salvation or emancipation. But if the gifts presented by the world and God are not given back to them, it is dishonesty. This dishonesty is called bondage.

Having offered the gift of the world to the

world and having offered the gift of God to Him, he should be free from all worries. He should be a yesman to His will, having no desire of his own, either to live or to die or to have favourable circumstances. Having surrendered himself to God, he should pray to Him to enable him not to forget Him in whatever circumstance he is placed by Him–on the earth, or in heaven or in hells; in childhood or in youth or in oldage; honoured or dishonoured; happy or sad.

A man is worried about the limited property, riches and the family he regards as his own but he is not worried about a lot of property, riches and millions of families he does not regard as his own. Thus he is liberated or emancipated from most of them. Only a little bondage is there. If he ceases to regard the limited as his own, he will be emancipated from them also.

We should give a serious thought to the topic that a few persons and a little property we regard as our own will lead us to the bondage of birth and death. Therefore a striver should surrender the body and objects to the world–which is the path of action: or he should distinguish the self from the world including the body–this is the path of knowledge; or he should surrender himself to God–this is the path of devotion. A striver may follow any one of the three paths—each will bear the same fruit.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse describes by giving an illustration, how the soul, taking the mind and senses with It by assuming them as Its own, wanders in innumerable wombs.

शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्क्रामतीश्वरः ।
गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात् ॥ ८ ॥

śarīraṁ yadavāpnoti yaccāpyutkrāmatīśvaraḥ
gṛhītvaitāni saṁyāti vāyurgandhānivāśayāt

As the wind wafts scents from their seats, so does the Jīvātmā (embodied soul), assuming itself as the lord of bodies etc., taking the senses along with the mind from the body which it leaves behind, migrates to the body which it acquires. 8

Comment:

'Vāyurgandhānivāśayāt'—Just as the wind carries scent (perfume) from a perfume box but this perfume does not stay permanently in the wind because the wind has no eternal affinity for the scent, so does the individual soul carrying the senses, mind, intellect and natural instincts etc., (subtle and causal–both bodies) by assuming them as Its own, migrates to the body which It acquires.

As essentially the wind is unconnected with the smell (scent) so is the soul unconnected with the mind, senses and body etc., but It, by assuming them as Its own, attracts them towards it.

As wind in spite of being the evolute of ether carries smell (perfume) a fragment of the earth, so does the soul in spite of being a fragment of God carrying the transitory body, the evolute of Nature migrate to the different wombs. The wind being Matter (insentient) does not possess the discrimination that it should not take scent from its seat. But the embodied-soul has the discrimination and power to renounce affinity for the body. Every human being has been bestowed upon independence by which he can either get attached to the insentient body etc., or renounce this attachment. In order to rectify the error he should accept the reality, by changing the assumption that he (the soul) has no affinity for the physical, the subtle and the causal bodies, the fragment of Nature. Then he can be easily liberated from the bondage of birth and death.

In the illustration the Lord has used three words – (1) Wind (2) Scent (perfume) (3) Seat.

Here the seat stands for the physical body. As wind carries scent from the perfume box and the box is left behind, so does the soul carry the subtle and causal bodies while the physical body is left behind.

'Śarīraṁ yadavāpnoti yaccāpyutkrāmatīśvaraḥ gṛhītvaitāni saṁyāti'— Here the term 'Īśvaraḥ' stands for the embodied soul. This soul commits three errors– (1) It regards Itself as the master of the mind, intellect and body etc., but actually becomes their slave. (2) It having become the master of insentient objects, forgets Its real master, God.

(3) It does not renounce Its assumed affinity for the insentient objects though It is independent in renouncing them.

God has provided independence to the embodied-soul to make proper use of objects such as the body etc., in order to attain salvation rather than to become their master. But by an error It instead of properly utilizing them regards Itself as their master but really becomes their slave.

It can renounce this assumed affinity only when it comes to know that It has become a slave to the mundane objects such as body etc., whose master It regards Itself. By doing so he (the soul) feels shortage of the mundane objects and becomes an orphan.

He who loves becoming a master cannot attain God because he forgets the real master. A child in childhood cannot live without his mother but when it grows young and as a householder becomes the master of his sons and wife etc., he forgets his mother; so does the soul forget Its real master when It becomes the master of insentient objects such as the body etc. So long as this forgetfulness continues i.e., It has a disinclination for God, It will go on suffering.

The term 'Api' with the term 'Īśvaraḥ' has been used to denote that this lord i.e., the individual soul is not powerless, insentient and dependent like the wind. It has capability and discrimination to renounce the assumed affinity for the world and realize Its true affinity for God. But it is because of Its yearning for sensual pleasures that it neither renounces nor does It want to renounce Its assumed affinity for the world. As soon as It renounces this affinity, it can't carry the bodies (like the scent) with It.

A man (soul) has got two kinds of power (i) Life-breath power (ii) Will power (power of desire). The life-breath power decays every moment and when it comes to an end, that is called death. Attachment to the insentient leads a man to have desire to act and to acquire. If this desire to act and to acquire is wiped out while possessing the life-breath power, the man is emancipated. But if he gives up the body while possessing desire he has to be reborn with the will (desire) power of the previous birth while he receives new life-breath.

The life-breath power should be spent in wiping out desires. The desire can be easily wiped out by being engrossed in the welfare of all beings without any selfish motive.

The term 'Gṛhītvā' means attachment and attraction of the soul to the mind and senses which It takes with It by regarding them as Its, while they never regard It as theirs nor are they controlled by It. This error of attachment binds It.

Whether a thing is acquired or not whether it is superior or inferior, whether it is being used by us or not, whether it is far or near, if we regard it as ours, our attachment to it subsists.

A man (the self) remains attached to the mundane objects such as the body etc., even after giving up the body. Therefore the bones of the dead body are put into the Ganges so that the man (self or soul) may attain salvation. We are free and powerful enough to renounce this assumed affinity (attachment). If we renounce it during this life we may attain salvation in this life.

This inclination towards the mundane objects which are not ours and disinclination for God Who is ours are the great stumbling blocks to spiritual progress.

The term 'Etāni' stands for the mind and the five senses referred to in the seventh verse. Here it denotes mind, intellect, five senses, five organs of action and five life-breaths— the aggregate of the seventeen elements of the subtle body as well as the causal body. The embodied soul, taking all of them migrates to the body which it acquires. Just as a person

casts off worn out clothes and puts on new ones, so does the embodied soul cast off womout bodies and enter others which are new (Gītā 2/22).

In fact it is not possible for the pure sentient soul to renounce a body and to migrate to another body because It is inmovable and all-pervading (Gītā 2/17,24). But when It identifies Itself with the body the evolute of Nature i.e., It is seated in Nature, It gives up one body and acquires another body. When the soul ceases to identify Itself with the bodies (physical, subtle and causal), It is not reborn because it is its assumed identification with the body which is the cause of Its birth in good and evil wombs.

Link:–Now the Lord explains the expression 'Manaḥṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi' used in the seventh verse.

श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणमेव च ।
अधिष्ठाय मनश्चायं विषयानुपसेवते ॥ ९ ॥

śrotraṁ cakṣuḥ sparśanaṁ ca rasanaṁ ghrāṇameva ca
adhiṣṭhāya manaścāyaṁ viṣayānupasevate

It (The individual soul) enjoys the objects of senses using the senses of hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell as well as the mind. 9

Comment:

'Adhiṣṭhāya manaścāyam'—Several (good or bad) projections and distractions appear and disappear in the mind while the self (sentient soul) ever remains the same because It transcends the insentient body, senses, mind and intellect and is their base and illuminator.

The self joined with the mind experiences (enjoys) the objects of the senses such as form (colour), touch, sound, taste and smell. It can't experience pleasure or pain with the senses without the mind. It is only through the mind that the embodied soul enjoys sense-objects.

'Śrotraṁ cakṣuḥ sparśanaṁ ca rasanaṁ ghrāṇameva ca'—Ear, the sense of hearing has the power of hearing.*

Till today we have heard the favourable (praise honour, blessing, melody, music etc.) and unfavourable (blame, dishonour,curse, abuse etc.) words but have they affected the self in anyway ? No.

A person hears the happy news of the birth of his grandson and the sad news of the death of his son at the same time. Thus he has knowledge of the two news. But is there any difference in that knowledge or in the self?

We have seen many pleasant and unpleasant (horrible) scenes with our own eyes. But have they affected the self in anyway?

We have touched many soft or hard, hot or cold objects but is there any difference because of the touch in the self?

We have tasted the bitter, pungent, sweet, astringent sour and saltish food but have they left any effect on the self.?

Similarly we have experienced different kinds of good and bad scents. But is there difference in the self because of those scents?

An Important Fact

The five senses of hearing, sight, touch (skin), taste and smell, have affinity respectively for the five organs of actions—

* The thoughts that come to the mind are projections and distractions. During sleep they appear as dream. We don't express every thought nor do we act according to this thought because we apply our own intellect. Expression of every thought and translating it into practice are nothing but insanity. Thus projections, distractions, dream and insanity are one and the same.

Through ears we get two kinds of knowledge (i) of sound (ii) of subject. So the sense of hearing plays an important role in both the paths of knowledge and of devotion though through the sense of seeing (eye) also the subject can be known by studying the scriptures but that is also the power of sound in written form. When we start studying, first we gain knowledge through hearing. The sound has such power which can't be thought of. The sense of hearing only can receive, that power not the other senses.

tongue, feet, hands, genital organ and anus. As he who is deaf, is also dumb; the oil rubbed on the sole of the feet has a healthy effect on the sight; hands can be used to touch an object because of skin; control over the tongue controls the genital organ; smell makes its entrance through nose while it makes its exit through anus.

The five sense-organs, the five organs of action and the five senses are formed respectively out of the portions of the mode of goodness, the mode of passion and the mode of ignorance of each of the five subtle elements.

Five subtle lements	Portion of the mode of goodness	Portion of the mode of passion	Portion of the mode of ignorance
Ether	Ear	Tongue (the organ of speech)	Sound
Air	Skin	Hands	Touch
Fire	Eye	Feet	Sight (colour)
Water	Tongue (for taste)	Genital organ	Taste
Earth	Nose	Anus	Smell

The mind and the intellect are made of the portion of the mixed mode of goodness of one of the five subtle elements, the life breath is made of the portion of the mixed mode of passion while the body is made of the portion of the mixed mode of ignorance.

'Viṣayānupasevate'—As a businessman stops his business at one place and starts it at another place because of any reason, so does the soul migrate from one body to another and It starts enjoying the objects of senses in the new body also, as it did in the first body, because of Its habit. Thus the embodied soul has to be born in good and evil wombs because of its attachment to sense-objects.

God has bestowed this human body upon us to enable us to attain salvation rather than to enjoy pleasures or to experience pain. As we can feed the cow which is given to a Brāhmaṇa as a charity but we can't lay claim to its milk, so can we make proper use of the body bestowed upon us by God but we can't enjoy the objects of senses with it.

An Important Fact

The more the embodied soul enjoys the objects of senses, the more It is attached to them. This attachment leads It to rebirth and all sorrows. In fact the pleasures born of contact with objects of senses are illusory and sources of sorrow but they seem pleasant in the beginning out of ignorance (Gītā 18/38). Had there been happiness in sense-objects, the prosperous persons possessing all the luxuries must have been happy but they also undergo sufferings and disquietude. Enjoyment of pleasures results in loss of wealth, health, quietude, patience, happiness and honour etc.*

As thirst is not quenched by drinking water in the dream, so can a man not attain peace by enjoying the objects of senses. A man thinks that he will attain peace through prosperity and pleasures. But the more prosperity he acquires and the more pleasures he enjoys, the keener desire he has to acquire and enjoy them †. "All the riches of the world, all beautiful women, all excellent objects can't satisfy even a man if he acquires all of them" (Viṣṇupurāṇa 4/10/24; Mahā. Ādi. 85/13) because the soul is a fragment of God and is sentient while the sense-objects are fragments of Prakṛti (Nature) and are insentient. So how can the insentient and perishable satisfy the sentient and imperi-

* We have not enjoyed pleasures (the objects of senses). The objects of senses have enjoyed us; we have not performed penances, penances have burnt us; time has not been spent, we have been spent: desire has not decayed but we have decayed.

† Desire is never satisfied after enjoying the sensual pleasures but it is rather strengthened in the same way as fire burns up when clarified ghee is added to it (Manu. 2/94).

shable ? As thirst can't be quenched even by the most delicious dishes without water, so can the thirst for God-Realization not be quenched by the insentient mundane objects. The more he possesses them, the more hungry he feels.

If the striver has a resolve this very day that he has not to enjoy the objects of senses. Then their thought ceases to come to his mind and it leads him to be even minded. Those who gain equanimity of mind naturally realize God (Gītā 5/19) because He is ever attained but He remains veiled because of a striver's attachment to the objects of senses.

Not to talk of God-Realization even steadiness of mind concentrated on God cannot be had by those who are attached to pleasures and prosperity (Gītā 2/44).

Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsa in the Rāmacarita-mānasa wishes that as a voluptuary loves a woman and is attracted towards her because of her beauty and as a greedy person hankers after riches and hoards them, so should he be attracted towards Raghunātha's handsome form and make a treasure of the divine name (Lord Rāma) continuously. Mundane pleasures and prosperity are not ever dear even to a worldly person but the form and chanting of the name of Lord Rāma are ever dear to devotees.

Link:–In the preceding three verses there is description of the soul (embodied or individual soul). While concluding the topic the Lord in the next verse describes who knows this soul and who does not know It.

उत्क्रामन्तं स्थितं वापि भुञ्जानं वा गुणान्वितम् ।
विमूढा नानुपश्यन्ति पश्यन्ति ज्ञानचक्षुषः ॥ १० ॥

utkrāmantaṁ sthitaṁ vāpi bhuñjānaṁ vā guṇānvitam
vimūḍhā nānupaśyanti paśyanti jñānacakṣuṣaḥ

The deluded don't know the soul departing from, or dwelling in the body, or enjoying the objects of senses, in contact with the modes; but they who possess the eye of wisdom behold It. 10

Comment:

'Utkrāmantam'—The soul (self) while giving up the physical body departs taking the subtle body and the causal body with It. So long as the heart beats, the soul dwells in that body. Even when the heart stops beating the soul may stay for some time. In fact the soul being immovable and sentient does not migrate (depart) it is life breath which migrates. But It is said to migrate because of its attachment to the subtle body and the causal body.

The term 'Utkrāmati' used for the 'Jīvātmā' (embodied soul) which assumes itself as the lord as mentioned in the eighth verse, has been called here 'Utkrāmantam' (depart).

'Sthitaṁ vā'—As the camera takes the same photograph as is the object, so is the subtle body formed according to the thought which a person has at the time of death. As the photograph is prepared after sometime, so is the physical body prepared according to the thought of the last moment after sometime.

The term which has been described as 'Yadavāpnoti' in the eighth verse has been called 'Sthitam' here.

'Api bhuñjānaṁ vā'—When a man enjoys the objects of senses of sound, touch, form, taste and smell, he holds that he is very careful, he knows the objects of senses well and enjoys them carefully. But in fact he is deluded as their enjoyment leads him to hells and evil wombs.

Philosophers and the scriptures are of different opinions about God, the soul and the world. But all of them agree that the soul suffers because of Its attachment to the

world and attains bliss by having affinity for God.

The deluded hear, study and also declare that the world is transient and kaleidoscopic, yet they hold it as permanent because they can't enjoy the objects of senses without regarding them as real or permanent. A voluptuary becomes so much deluded that he regards gratification of lust as his highest aim (Gītā 16/11). So his eyes of wisdom ever remain shut. People know that they have to die because they are living in the world of mortals yet they want to live in order to enjoy sense-objects.

The term 'Api' denotes that when the soul having given up one body migrates (with subtle body and causal body) to another body to acquire it and enjoys the objects of senses, It in spite of appearing attached to the modes, remains detached. In fact the soul (self) neither departs, nor stays nor enjoys, Itself.

The expression 'Viṣayānupasevate' used in the preceding verse has been termed here as 'Bhuñjānam'.

'Guṇānvitam'—It means that it is because of the assumed contact of the soul with the modes that the activities of departure, stay and enjoyment appear in It.

In fact the soul has no affinity for the modes but by an error It assumes Its affinity for them in order to derive pleasure out of the world and so It has to take birth in high and low wombs.

A man in order to derive pleasure out of the world assumes his affinity for the persons and objects of the world. The orator regards the audience as his, a person having no son adopts a boy as his son, he who has no real brother or sister assumes relationship of a brother or a sister with any one else and so on. The Lord declares that the embodied soul, in spite of being transcendental (beyond Guṇas) in its intrinsic nature, by assuming relationship with Guṇas (space, time, individual, object) gets in bondage.

The expression 'Prakṛtisthāni' used in the seventh verse stands for the expression 'Guṇānvitam' used here.

A Vital Fact

So long as a man is in the least attached to Prakṛti (Nature) and its evolute, the modes, he is made to act helplessly by the modes of Nature (Gītā 3/5). If he (the sentient self) depends on the insentient Nature, he suffers from the evil of pollution. Even when he totally becomes free from the modes of Nature but relishes this freedom (because of the trace of egoism), the evil of pollution persists. But when he ceases to relish it his evil of adulteration comes to an end, and his devotion accelerates continuously. The supreme aim of a man is to attain this devotion. Having attained this devotion (love) a devotee attains perfection. The Lord having bestowed upon His devotee this unique devotion gets pleased and considers him the most devout among all the Yogīs (Gītā 6/47).

A man transcends the three modes of Nature by having affinity for the spiritual discipline because of the help of discrimination but having transcended the three modes of Nature he attains devotion (love) to Him by having affinity for His grace.

'Vimūḍhā nānupaśyanti'—As we remain the same while performing different actions, so does the self (soul) remain the same while giving up one body, acquiring another body and enjoying the objects of senses. But he, who having identified the self with the body, thinks he is the doer (3/27) is the deluded one who does not behold the reality.

The deluded are so much attached to pleasures and prosperity that they don't realize the fact that the mundane objects such as the body etc., are perishable. Moreover they don't think that the sensual pleasures are sources of sorrow. While describing the food of three kinds in the seventeenth chapter which are dear to the good, the passionate and the ignorant, the Lord first has given the effect of the food liked by the good, the effect of the food liked by the passionate has been given afterwards, while no effect has been given

of the food which is dear to the ignorant (Gītā 17/8-10). Why ? The reason is that the good person thinks of the fruit before performing the action, the passionate first performs the action and then reaps its fruit while the ignorant person does not think of the result at all. So the Lord here means to say that the deluded (delusion is a trait of the ignorant) while enjoying the objects of senses, don't think of the result of sensual enjoyments. They remain engrossed in pleasures and prosperity. Their knowledge remains veiled by the mode of ignorance and therefore they can't distinguish the soul from the body.

'Paśyanti jñānacakṣuṣaḥ'—All the beings, objects, incident and circumstances are kaleidoscopic i.e., the seen is changing into the unseen. This is known as beholding with the eye of wisdom. The unchanging (permanent) can perceive the changing.

A wise man also gives up the physical body but he neither acquires another body nor does he enjoy the objects of senses with attachment. The Lord in the thirteenth verse of the second chapter declares, "Just as in this body the embodied (soul) passes through childhood, youth and old age, so also does It pass into another body. But the wise man is not deluded (perplexed) by this." The reason is that the wise man beholds with the eye of wisdom that all activities such as birth or death etc., or modifications occur in the kaleidoscopic body rather than in the uniform self. The self ever remains free totally from all modifications. It is because of identification with the body and because of the desire to derive pleasures out of it that a man feels modification in him (the self). The deluded behold the soul connected with the modes while the wise behold It in reality, free from contact with the modes.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse describes those who perceive (behold) Him by striving and also those who do not behold Him even by striving (for perfection).

यतन्तो योगिनश्चैनं पश्यन्त्यात्मन्यवस्थितम् ।
यतन्तोऽप्यकृतात्मानो नैनं पश्यन्त्यचेतसः ॥ ११ ॥

yatanto yoginaścainaṁ paśyantyātmanyavasthitam
yatanto'pyakṛtātmāno nainaṁ paśyantyacetasaḥ

The aspirants striving perceive Him as established in the self, but the unintelligent and the unrefined who have not purified their hearts, even though striving do not behold (realize) Him. 11

Comment:

'Yatanto yoginaścainaṁ paśyanti'—Here the term 'Yoginaḥ' stands for those strivers following the path of knowledge whose only aim is God-Realization.

The term 'Yatantaḥ' here stands for 'striving' with a firm determination from the heart.

The strivers whose only aim is God-Realization become automatically free from attachment, the sense of mine and the desire for fruit. They strive with exclusive devotion, and so yearning promptness, restlessness and thoughtfulness are naturally revealed in them. This is all included in the term 'Yatantaḥ' used here. Such strivers who strive with exclusive devotion and firm determination having a disinclination for the world, perceive Him established in the self. The term 'Paśyanti' stands for this perception.

Such strivers who want to attain the real (God-Realization) and renounce the unreal (world) perceive Him as established in the self when their discrimination is fully aroused.

'Ātmanyavasthitam'—God (The Supreme Being) ever equally pervades every-

where. He is the self seated in the hearts of all beings (Gītā 10/20). Therefore the Yogīs (sages) realize (behold) Him in the self.

Existence is of two kinds (1) That which undergoes modifications or changeable (2) Axiomatic (self-evident). The existence which has its appearance after being born is called changeable existence while the existence which is never born but which exists eternally and remains as it is in a uniform way is called axiomatic existence. The world and the bodies undergo modifications while God and the soul are self-evident. It is an error to identify the self with the body*. When a striver renounces this identity as well as the sense of mine, he gets established in the self.

When a man does not attach importance to discrimination bestowed upon him by God, he is bound through egoism and the sense of 'mine'. This affinity is so much stregthened that it continues even after death and it is also so brittle that it can be broken any time and a man is free in maintaining it or renouncing it. By misusing this freedom he creats affinity with body etc., which don't belong to his class.

When a man does not attach importance to discrimination it is veiled and then the body seems real. But by good company and the study of the scriptures etc., as this discrimination is unveiled, the assumed affinity for the body is renounced. When discrimination is fully unveiled (aroused) a striver realizes that he is naturally established in the self. This is what the Lord means by the expression 'Ātmani avasthitam'.

Egoism is born by the attachment of a man (the self) to the world. Egoism can be of two kinds (1) Through hearing from others —'I am' Mohana or Śyāma and 'I am Brāhmaṇa or Kṣatriya (2) Through the performance of actions– 'I am an orator or a teacher or a physician through speech, teaching and treating patients. But this egoism is a temporary phase. When it is renounced, the striver realizes that he is established in the self.

A Vital Fact

(1)

God in the form of 'Is' Who pervades everywhere, is the illuminator and base of 'I' 'you' 'this' and 'that'. These four ever undergo changes while He (Is) never undergoes any change. Moreover it is because of his egoistic notion that a man feels that he is different from others i.e., he has to use 'am' because he says 'I' otherwise there is only 'Is'. Till 'I'ness persists, there is individuality or finiteness. On its effacement only 'Is' i.e., the Absolute remains.

'Ātmani avasthitam' means that there is 'Is' in'Am' and 'Am' in 'Is.' In other words there is macro in micro and micro in macro. An individual and the society can't be separated from each other in the same way as the waves and the sea cannot be separated from each other. But as in the element water, neither the sea nor the waves are there, so is God free from an individual or the society. When a striver realizes this fact, he realizes that He is established in the self.

A man can't realize that He is established in the self because of his attachment to the world to derive pleasure out of it and because of his disinclination for Him. When he renounces this attachment, he realizes (beholds) that He is established in the self and does not suffer pain of separation from Him†.

He who beholds God in the self does not support the opinion that God is different from the self. It is the sense of 'I' ness which separates the self from God. In fact the self has no evil such as 'I'ness or dependence or shortage or ignorance etc. But by an error a man (the self) assumes that they are in him. In order to remove these evils he should behold Him in the self. When he beholds Him in the self he becomes free from all evils because in Him there is no evil.

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* A man identifies the self with the body and has egoistic notion. Similarly he regards the body as 'mine'. It is because of his egoistic notion that the body seems real to him and it is because of the sense of mine with the body that he is attached to it.

† Only wise who constantly behold God in the self attain eternal bliss (Katha. 2/2/13).

As the world is kaleidoscopic so is 'I' because it is a fragment of the world, as "I am a boy", "I am young", "I am old", "I am sick", "I am healthy" and so on* Both the world and 'I' are perishable while the self and God are imperishable. As the world has no existence, so does 'I' also have no existence.

Saint Sundaradāsa declares,"We see what does not exist but we do not see what exists." The reason is that the instruments such as the mind, intellect and senses etc., with which we see, also don't exist. So the unreal can be seen with the help of the unreal, the real can't be seen with the help of the unreal.

Moreover the unreal seems to exist in the light of the real. The real is the illuminator and the base of the unreal. As we can see the world with the eye but we can't see the eye with it, so how can God, Who is the knower of all, be known by them? How can the unreal, which is illumined by the real, illumine the real?

The self can be realized by the self rather than by senses, mind and intellect etc. Similarly God Who is established in the self can also be realized by the self rather than through discourses or through intellect or through hearing† because the senses, the mind and the intellect etc., are the evolutes of Nature. How can He Who transcends Nature be known by the evolutes of Nature? Therefore when a striver renounces his affinity for Nature, he realizes Him in the self.

A striver commits an error that he wants to know God in the same way as he knows the world. But the methods of knowing the two are contrary to each other. The world can be known by the instruments (means) such as senses, mind and intellect etc., while God can't be known by them because He is beyond their access as He is transcendental.

The sentient can't be realized by depending on the insentient. Those who having depended on Matter or the insentient (physical, subtle and causal bodies) want to realize God, can't realize Him even through trance because trance also depends on the causal body.‡

The wise, who know that God is theirs and they are God's, with eye of wisdom, having separated the self from the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., realize him. But those unwise and unrefined people who regard the body as theirs and who consider themselves of the body, even though striving, don't realize God, Who is established in the self.

(2)

'Ātmani avasthitam'—The Lord has declared that He is established in the self of all beings (i.e., He pervades everywhere). In order to realize this fact a striver should believe in the following four points:–

1. God is here.
2. God is now.
3. God is in me.
4. God is mine.

As God pervades everywhere, He is also here. As He existed in the past, exists at present and will also exist in future, He is also now. As He pervades all, He also pervades me and as He is everyone's, He is also mine. From these facts it is very obvious—1. As God is here, we need not

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* Here a doubt may arise that the states of boyhood and youth etc., change but 'I' remains the same, The explanation is 'I' seems the same because of its identity with the reality (sentient). In fact the illuminator of 'I' (i.e., the self) remains the same while there is a subtle change in 'I'. 'I' is not the same in youth as 'I' was in boyhood. Similarly there is change in 'I' when the soul passes into another body though the self remains the same (Gītā 2/13).

† (1) God can be realized neither through discourses, nor through intellect nor through much hearing (Katha 1/2/23).
(2) God can be realized neither through speech nor through mind nor through eyes (Katha 2/3/12).

‡ A man acts with the physical body, thinks with the subtle body and experiences trance with the causal body.
The causal body and the trance experienced with it in spite of being superior to wakefulness, sleep and sound sleep are in their subtle form constantly active. When a person transcends the causal body, only the self remains. This is the constant trance of the self, which transcends both activity and inactivity i.e., when a man realizes the self there is neither activity nor inactivity. There is deviation from the trance of the causal body. But in the trance of the self viz., on Self-Realization there is neither trance nor deviation. This is known as 'seedless trance' because in it the connection (seed) with the world is totally destroyed. This is also known as 'Sahajāvasthā' (innate or natural condition) though it transcends all conditions.

go anywhere to realize Him.
2. As God is present now, we need not wait for future.
3. As He is in me, I need not search Him anywhere outside.
4. As He is mine, I need not regard others as mine. He is also very loving to me because He is mine.

These four points are very significant and useful for all strivers. This is the quintessence of all spiritual practices. It needs no qualification, no practice, no ability and no virtue. Everyone is qualified, deserving and able in believing it. The only condition is that he should have the only desire for God-Realization.

'Yatantopyakṛtātmāno nainaṁ paśyantyacetasaḥ'—'Akṛtātmānaḥ' are those unrefined people who have not purified their mind, they have been called 'Acetasaḥ' (unintelligent) because they don't discriminate the real from the unreal.

Those, who regard the mundane objects such as the body and also the persons as theirs and expect to derive pleasure out of them, by attaching importance to them, are unintelligent and unrefined. Such people also want to realize God but they want to realize Him with the help of insentient objects such as the body, mind and intellect etc. But He can't be realized with their help, He can be realized by renouncing attachment to them.

In this verse the term 'Yatantaḥ' has been used twice in order to explain that the wise perceive Him by striving while the unintelligent do not behold Him even by striving. It means that so long as a man is attached to the worldly objects, he can't realize God with the body, senses, mind and intellect though these are useful in making effort to attain Him. How can those who have an eye on the unreal (mundane pleasures and prosperity) behold Him?

The unrefined and unintelligent people also meditate on God, study the scriptures and chant His name but they can't behold Him because they attach importance to the mundane objects (pleasures and prosperity). Though their efforts are not in vain, yet they can't realize Him at the present moment. He can be realized immediately if a striver renounces attachment to the insentient totally.

A striver can't renounce attachment to the insentient body, mind and intellect etc., so long as he depends upon them. Moreover he possesses egoism in its subtle form, if he practises spiritual discipline with the help of the mind and intellect etc. He can be free from this subtle egoism by renouncing attachment to the insentient. This attachment can be easily renounced when a striver totally depends on God i.e., he firmly believes and accepts the reality 'I am God's and God is mine'. It needs neither effort nor practice.

Link:–In the fifteenth chapter there are four topics each consisting of five verses. This is the Third topic of five verses from the twelfth to the fifteenth verses as well as the sixth verse. This topic specially deals with His glory, virtues and divinity. The topic (how the sun, the moon, the fire don't illumine that Eternal Goal) which was not very clear there in the sixth verse, is explained in the next verse.

यदादित्यगतं तेजो जगद्भासयतेऽखिलम्।
यच्चन्द्रमसि यच्चाग्नौ तत्तेजो विद्धि मामकम्॥ १२॥

yadādityagatam tejo jagadbhāsayate'khilam
yaccandramasi yaccāgnau tattejo viddhi māmakam

The light (splendour) of the sun that illumines the whole world and which is in the moon and in the fire – know that light to be Mine. 12

Comment:

[It is a man's nature that he is attracted towards a thing which he feels as significant. He is attached to the material objects (body, wife, son and riches etc.) by regarding them as significant. Therefore the Lord, in order to efface the influence of the worldly objects from the mind of the embodied soul, discloses the secret that whatever significance or splendour there is of those material objects that is really (basically) His as all of them are illumined by His light because He is supremely glorious.]

'Yadāditya gatam tejo jagad-bhāsayate'khilam'—As the Lord (in 2/55) declares that desires reside in the mind so does He here declare that the light (splendour) resides in the sun. It means that as desires appear in the mind though they are not of the mind, so does the light appear that it is of the sun, though it is not its, it comes from God.

The light (splendour) of the sun illumines the whole world but that light is really God's, though it appears to be of the sun, so the sun cannot illumine God or His Supreme Abode. The great sage Patañjali, declares.

"God is the preceptor of the ancestor of all beings because He transcends the limit of time" (Yogadarśana 1/26).

How much influential and unique God must be when His light (splendour) is so unique that with it the sun illumines the world and the same light is reflected in the moon, the fire, the stars and the lightning (electricity) etc.! By thinking so a man is naturally attracted towards Him.

The sun is the presiding deity of eyes. Therefore the light (power of sight) in eyes should also be regarded as God's (coming from Him).

'Yaccandramasi'—As the illuminating power as well as the burning power in the sun is God's so is the illuminating power or the cooling power as well as the nourishing power in the moon God's because in the moon the light of the sun is reflected.

Here the moon also denotes stars and planets.

The moon is the presiding deity of the mind. Therefore the light (power of thought) in the mind should also be regarded as transmitted in succession from God.

'Yaccāgnau'—As the sun's light is reflected in the fire, so is the fire's illuminating power as well as the burning power God's rather than of the fire.

The fire also denotes lightning (electricity), lamp and fire-fly.

Fire is the presiding deity of speech. Therefore the light (power of explanation) in the speech should also be regarded as God's.

'Tattejo viddhi māmakam'—The light which resides in the sun, the moon and the fire and which illumines other objects (stars, planets, lightning and fire-fly etc.) should be regarded as God's.

The Lord means to say that whatever being or object there is glorious or splendid and to whom a man is attracted, is a manifestation of a part of His splendour (Gītā 10/41). As in sweetmeats there is sweetness of sugar, so is the light (splendour) in the sun, the moon and the fire of God. The whole world is illumined by His light. He is the light of all light (Gītā 13/17).

The sun, the moon and the fire are the presiding deities and illuminators respectively of the eye, the mind and the speech. A man, in order to express his thoughts or feelings and in order to understand them, has to use his eyes, mind and tongue. These three sense-organs are more useful than other organs in order to gain knowledge. Out of these three the eye and the tongue are the external organs while the mind is the internal one. These three instruments (organs) can illumine only worldly objects. They cannot illumine God because the light residing in them is not theirs but is God's.

Link:–Having explained His light (splendour) in all the seen objects in the preceding verse, in the next verse He explains how His energy is energizing the cosmic life.

गामाविश्य च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा ।
पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ॥ १३ ॥

gāmāviśya ca bhūtāni dhārayāmyahamojasā
puṣṇāmi cauṣadhīḥ sarvāḥ somo bhūtvā rasātmakaḥ

Entering the earth I support all beings by My energy and having become the sapid (watery) moon, I nourish all herbs (plants). 13

Comment:

'Gāmāviśya ca bhūtāni dhārayāmyahamojasā' —The Lord permeating the earth supports all beings moving and unmoving. It means that the movable as well as immovable beings are supported not by the power of the earth but by the power of God.*

The scientists also agree that on this globe water level is higher than the land and there is much more portion of water than of the land† yet the earth does not submerge. It is because of the Lord's supporting power that the earth does not submerge. The production power as well as the attraction power of the earth should also be regarded as God's.

'Puṣṇāmi cauṣadhīḥ sarvāḥ somo bhūtvā rasātmakaḥ'—The moon has two kinds of power — the illuminating and the nourishing. Having described the illuminating power in the preceding verse, here He describes its nourishing power, He declares that it is He Who through the medium of the moon nourishes all herbs.

The moon in the bright half of the lunar month nourishes herbs while in the dark half it withers them. In the bright half the sweet rays of the moon nourishes all herbs and plants by infusing sap into them. A child in the womb of its mother also grows in the bright half of the lunar month.

Here the term 'Somaḥ' stands for the 'Candraloka' (the lunar world) rather than only the moon. The moon has not only the illuminating power but also the nectar-power. That nectar first comes to the moon from the lunar-world and then it comes to the earth from the moon.

Here the term 'Auṣadhīḥ' stands for different kinds of corn such as wheat and gram etc. The moon nourishes all herbs, plants and vegetables. All beings such as men, birds and beasts etc., are nourished by the corn nourished by the moon. That nourishing power of the moon is in fact of God rather than its own. The moon is merely an instrument of His hands.

Link:–Having explained how He is the source of energy of the cosmic life in the preceding verse, in the next verse He explains how He digests food through the gastric fire.

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।
प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥ १४ ॥

aham vaiśvānaro bhūtvā prāṇināṁ dehamāśritaḥ
prāṇāpānasamāyuktaḥ pacāmyannaṁ caturvidham

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* All–the heaven, the sun, the moon, the sky with stars, the ten directions, the earth and the occean are supported by the power of God (Mahābhārata, Anu. 149/134).

He Who, having resided the earth, controls it but is not known by the earth; He Who is declared by the verse of the Vedas as the embodiment of purity, the Lord, the controller, the Destination and the Deity of the universe, Who is said to offer salvation to men and sages—that Lord Krsna Candra, the Master of the entire universe, the affectionate of those who seek refuge in Him, be the subject of my eyes.

† On this globe (earth) water occupies seventy-one percent part while the land occupies only twenty-nine percent part.

Becoming the fire of life in the bodies of living creatures and united with the Prāṇa (ingoing) and Apāna (outgoing) breaths, I digest the four kinds of food. 14

Comment:

'Aham vaiśvānaro bhūtvā prāṇinām dehamāśritaḥ'—Having described the light in the fire as His light in the twelfth verse, here in this verse He describes the gastric fire that digests the four-fold food.* It means that it is by God's power that the fire illumines objects and also digests food. This fire digests food of immovable beings such as plants, trees and creepers, of movable beings such as birds and beasts etc., as it digests the food of human beings and enables them to grow. It means that God in the form of gastric fire nourishes the bodies of beings.

'Prāṇāpānasamāyuktaḥ'— In the body there are five primary vital airs known as 'Prāṇa' 'Apāna' 'Samāna', 'Udāna' and 'Vyāna' and there are five secondary vital airs known as 'Nāga' ,'Kūrma' 'Kṛkara', 'Devadatta' and 'Dhanañjaya†. In the verse the Lord describes only two main kinds of vital air—Prāṇa (ingoing) and Apāna (outgoing) which fan the fire that abides in the stomach and also circulate the essence of the digested food in every part of the body.

'Pacāmyannam caturvidham'— Beings eat four kinds of food.

(1) Bhojya:—That which is eaten having been chewed with teeth such as bread and sweet cake etc.

(2) Peya:—That which is swallowed as milk and juice etc.

(3) Coṣya:—That which is sucked such as sugar-cane and mango etc. The immovable beings such as the tree etc., receive food in this way.

(4) Lehya:—That which has to be licked such as sauce and honey etc.

These four kinds can further be divided into many other sub kinds. The Lord declares that it is He Who digests the four kinds of food by becoming gastric fire. No food can be digested without His power.

Link:–Having described His illuminating nourishing and digesting powers in the preceding three verses, the Lord in the next verse while concluding the topic declares that He is the only object worth knowing.

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि संनिविष्टो
मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च।
वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो
वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम्॥ १५॥

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* The fire that abides in the stomach is called Vaiśvānara and it digests the food which is eaten.

† The functions of these ten vital airs are as follows:—

(1) Prāṇa—It resides in the heart. It exhales air, digests the food and so on.

(2) Apāna:—It resides in anus. It inhales air, excretes waste matter and throw out the foetus from the womb.

(3) Samāna:—It resides in the navel. It circulates the essence of the digested food in all the limbs.

(4) Udāna:—It abides in the throat. It separates the solid and the liquid portions of food. It separates the subtle body from the physical body and transmigrates it to another body or to the world.

(5) Vyāna:—It abides in whole of the body. It shrinks and expands the body and its parts.

(6) Nāga:—It's function is belching.

(7) Kūrma:—It's function is shutting and opening the eyes

(8) Kṛkara: —It's function is sneezing.

(9) Devadatta:—It's function is yawning.

(10) Dhanañjaya:—It abides in the body even after death and puffs out the dead body.

sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi saṁniviṣṭo
mattaḥ smṛtirjñānamapohanaṁ ca
vedaiśca sarvairahameva vedyo
vedāntakṛdvedavideva cāham

I am seated in the hearts of all; I am the source of memory, knowledge and the ratiocinative faculty. It is verily 'I' Who am to be known by all the Vedas; I am indeed the author of the Vedānta and knower of the Vedas too. 15

Comment:

'Sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi saṁniviṣṭaḥ*'—Having described His illuminating, nourishing and digesting powers in the preceding verses the Lord discloses the secret that He is lodged in the hearts of all beings. Though He remains seated everywhere such as in the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., yet He specially resides in the heart.

The heart is an important part of the body. All the feelings spring up in the heart. The feeling occupies an important place of all the actions. The pure feeling purifies all objects and actions etc., and therefore is more important than they (are). The heart is an evolute of the mode of goodness; therefore the Lord is specially lodged in the heart.

As the Lord dwells in the hearts of all men, no striver should lose heart as far as God-Realization is concerned. Every person, whether he is sinful or virtuous, foolish or wise, poor or rich, sick or healthy or whether she is a woman, without any distinction of caste, creed, colour, order of life, is fully qualified and deserving for God-Realization under all circumstances. But he or she should possess such a burning desire or restlessness that he or she may not remain without realizing Him.

Though God being omnipresent pervades equally everywhere in the sun, the moon, the fire, the earth and the gastric fire etc., yet 'He is particularly seated in the heart in the same way as milk can be available from the udders of a cow though it pervades her entire body or as water is available from the well though it permeates the entire earth (Gītā 13/17; 18/61).

An Important Fact Pertaining to God

In fact God is attained to all human beings as He dwells in their hearts but they don't realize His existence in their hearts because of their assumed affinity (attachment) for Matter (the world). As soon as there is total renouncement of this affinity for Matter, they automatically realize Him.

When a person performs virtuous actions for Him, talks of Him and thinks of Him, he has to depend on Matter (the insentient and the unreal) because performance of actions or talking or thinking of Him is not possible without depending on the insentient (gross, subtle and causal bodies). So they should conduce a man to renounce his affinity for the world and that is possible only when they (virtuous actions, talking of God and thinking of Him) are done for the welfare of the world only, rather than for one's own self.

Those who think that God can be realized through spiritual practice or virtues or qualifications etc., are wrong. The thing that is acquired (attained) by making some payment, is of less value than that payment (price). So if God is attained by certain spiritual practice or virtues or qualifications etc., it means that He is less valuable than those means while there is none even equal to Him, so how can any one or anything be superior (of more value) to Him (Gītā 11/43) ? Moreover if He is bought (realized) for some money (by any means)

* The two birds named the soul and God live together with friendly feeling for each other by depending on the same tree i.e., body. Out of the two one (the soul) enjoys the fruits of that tree (action) by relishing them while the other one (God) does not enjoy them but merely remains a spectator (Muṇḍaka 3/1/1).

it means that there is not much utility of realizing Him because we already possess something more valuable than He.

God-Realization is not the fruit of actions as objects are acquired through actions. Every action is born of the egoistic notion while God is realized when egoistic notion is renounced. So how can He be realized through actions? It means that God cannot be realized through actions. It means that God cannot be realized through the insentient objects such as the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., but He can be realized by renouncing affinity (attachment) for them. So long as a striver depends upon them, he can't realize God. God can be realized through mind and intellect etc.—this belief is a blunder. But as soon as he depends only on Him without depending on any other object, He is attained without delay.

'Mattaḥ smṛtirjñānamapohanaṁ ca'—Smṛti means the recollection of an object or incident etc., which was perceived in the past by a person but which he forgot. There is difference between 'Smṛti' (recollection) and 'Cintana' (thinking). There is 'Smṛti' of something of the past while there is 'Cintana' of something new. So there is 'Smṛti' of God while there is 'Cintana' of the world because the world did not exist before while God has existed since time immemorial. There is not so much power in 'Cintana, as is there in 'Smṛti'. In 'Smṛti' there is less sense of doership while in 'Cintana' there is more sense of doership. This recollection can be of two kinds – natural and by efforts. The former is done by the self while the latter by the intellect.

Memory is of two types—One is resorted to while the other is automatic (natural). The former is through intellect while the latter is through the self. The natural recollection conduces a man to renounce his affinity for the world instantly. So the Lord declares that He is the source of this recollection (memory).

What is the memory? The memory is that he (the soul) in spite of being a fragment of God, by an error has an inclination to the world and a disinclination for God. But when a man rectifies this error and realizes that he is only God's, not of the world, it is called 'Smṛti' (memory or recollection) (Gītā 18/73). In memory no new knowledge or experience is gained. There is only the revelation of the fact which he forgot that a person has his real affinity for God.

A man (the soul) is naturally endowed with disinterested Action (Karmayoga or the path of action), Self-Realization (Jñānayoga or the path of knowledge) and Devotion to God (Bhaktiyoga or the path of devotion). But he has forgotten them since time immemorial. Once he regains this memory, he never loses it because it is regained (aroused) in the self rather than in the intellect. The memory of the intellect can be lost when the intellect becomes dull.

Knowledge of a subject is called 'Jñāna'. All the mundane as well as spiritual knowledge is merely a reflection of God, Who is an embodiment of knowledge. In fact real knowledge is known by the self. There is no doubt or confusion (illusion) in this knowledge as it is infinite, perfect and eternal while the knowledge of senses and intellect is limited, imperfect and changeable and so there is doubt or confusion (illusion) in it. The sun in spite of being big, seems small, it means that the knowledge of senses is imperfect. Similarly what is felt justified by the undeveloped intellect is felt unjustified when the intellect is developed or purified. Thus the knowledge gained by senses and mind is limited and imperfect. This imperfect knowledge is called ignorance while the knowledge of the self is perfect. In fact the knowledge of senses and intellect is illumined by the knowledge of the self i.e., the former comes into existence by the latter.

The removal of doubt, confusion, illusion, misapprehension and fallacious judgment etc., is 'Apohana'. The Lord declares that they are removed by His grace.

Are the scriptures true or false ? Who has seen God? The world is real. Such types of doubts, confusion and illusions are removed by God's grace. The misapprehension that

the world is real or the mundane objects provide real joy, is also removed by His grace. At the end of the gospel of the Gītā Arjuna also declares, "I have gained my knowledge (memory), my delusion (doubt) is destroyed through Your grace" (Gītā 18/73).

'Vedaiśca sarvairahameva vedyaḥ'—Here the term 'Sarvaiḥ' stands for the Vedas and the scriptures which conduce a man to acquire true knowledge of God and enable him to realize Him.

Here the Lord explains that the Vedas aim to enable a striver to realize God rather than to acquire mundane pleasures. There is description of the performance of actions for their fruits in the Vedas because most of the people perform actions for their fruits. Therefore, the Vedas (being the mother of all beings) also nourish them.

It is verily He who is to be known by all the Vedas because without knowing Him, knowledge is imperfect*. Arjuna had a keen desire to know God. Therefore the Lord declares that He Who is to be known by all the Vedas and the scriptures is sitting before him.

'Vedāntakṛt'—The Vedas were created by Him (Gītā 3/15; 17/23). Therefore He can explain the principles of the Vedas and can reconcile the contradictions that appear to exist in them. So He declares that He is the real knower of the Vedas and can give right judgment removing all doubts pertaining to the Vedas.

'Vedavideva cāham'—It is He who knows the correct intention of the Vedas because they have been created by Him.

Even the scholars find themselves at their wits end in giving right judgment pertaining to the contradictions in the Vedas (Gītā 2/53). They can know the Vedas in the right perspective and be liberated from contradictions only by depending on God.

The Lord in the first verse of this chapter declared, "He who knows this imperishable Peepul tree is the knower of the Vedas." But here He declares that He is the knower of the Vedas. It means that the great soul who knows the reality about the world becomes identified with God. The reality about the world is that the world has no existence of its own, only God exists. Having known this fact he renounces his assumed affinity for the world and dependence on it and he realizes his real affinity for God and depends on Him.

An Important Fact Pertaining to the Topic

The Lord has described His manifestations in the different forms in four chapters —

In the seventh chapter from the eighth verse to the twelfth verse the Lord has mentioned His seventeen manifestations by declaring that He is the cause of the important objects of the universe. Thus He has proved His omnipresence in different forms.

In the ninth chapter from the sixteenth verse to the nineteenth verse, He having described His thirty-seven manifestations in actions, sentiments and objects etc., in the form of effect and cause, has explained His omnipresence and all pervasiveness.

The tenth chapter is designated as the Yoga of the Divine manifestation. In the fourth and the fifth verses He has mentioned twenty qualities as His manifestation while in the sixth verse He has mentioned His twenty-five manifestations in the form of great persons. Then from the twentieth verse to the thirty-ninth verse He has particularly mentioned His eighty-two exceptional manifestations.

In this fifteenth chapter from the twelfth to the fifteenth verses the Lord has mentioned His thirteen manifestations in order to show His glory†.

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* Having studied the Vedas thoroughly the fool who does not know God is merely the bearer of the load of the Vedas.
(Mahābhārata, Śānti. 318/50)

† The thirteen manifestations described in this chapter are as follows:–
(1) The light (splendour) in the sun (2) The light in the moon (3) The light in the fire (4) The supporting energy of the earth (5) The nourishing power of the moon (6) The gastric fire (7) He is lodged in hearts (8) Memory (9) Knowledge (10) Ratiocinative faculty (11) He Who is to be known by the Vedas (12) The author of the Vedānta (13) The knower of the Vedas.

The purpose of the description of His manifestation in four chapters is to make the striver realize that all is God (Gītā 7/19). Therefore while describing His manifestations He has specially proved His omnipresence as–

"There is nothing whatsoever higher than Me; all this is strung on Me" (7/7).

"I am existence and non-existence, O Arjuna" (9/19).

"I am the source of all; from Me everything evolves" (10/8).

"There is no being whether moving or unmoving that can exist without Me" (10/39) i.e., all the beings whether moving or unmoving are His manifestations.

Thus while concluding His manifestation in this fifteenth chapter He declares:–

"I am seated in the hearts of all" (15/15).

It means that all beings and objects exist because of the existence of God; they have no independent existence of their own.

In the absence of light i.e., in darkness no object is visible. When we see an object, first we see the light and then the object i.e., every object is seen within the light but we instead of having our eye on the light have it on the object. Similarly we gain the knowledge of all objects, actions and feelings etc., within the unique and permanent Light (Knowledge) Who is the illuminator and base of all of them. Therefore when we behold the worldly objects, first the illuminator of those objects (God) is seen but because of our attachment to the world we don't have an eye on Him.

In fact the world has no independent existence. But it seems to exist because of our attachment to beings and objects and because of the desire to derive pleasures out of them. As soon as this attachment to them and the desire to derive pleasure out of them are renounced, God's existence will be realized. Therefore, the Lord while describing His manifestations aims at explaining that a striver should behold God in every being or object he looks at or thinks of (Gītā 10/41).

At present people attach too much importance to riches and regard themselves as superior to others because of their possession over wealth*. But in fact wealth itself can't be used. It is the things bought with that wealth that are used. Thus a man who attaches too much importance to wealth can't attach importance to God. Then how can a burning desire for God-Realization spring up in him? Such a man can't even resolve to realize God. He can't even understand that the life can run smoothly without wealth.

As a businessman during transaction thinks in terms of money only, so does a striver having the aim of God-Realization behold God only in every object and activity etc. He comes to realize that there neither is nor can be any other entity besides God.

A Vital Fact

Arjuna in the fourteenth chapter asked Lord Kṛṣṇa the method of transcending the three modes of nature. It is attachment to these modes which entangles a man. Therefore the Lord has mentioned here his manifestations in order to leave upon the strivers an impression that He is superior to all the modes of nature i.e., to the world and His glory is more than any other glory.

In order to explain His glory the Lord (from the twelfth to the fifteenth verses of the chapter) describes that it is He Who illumines the entire world; Who entering the earth supports all beings; who nourishes all herbs and plants (corn etc.). Again it is He Who digests the food by becoming gastric fire and it is He Who is the source of memory, knowledge and the ratiocinative faculty. It means that all the activities of the world from the beginning to the end whether they are individual or social are undertaken within Him, by His power only. A man because of his egoism, becomes the doer of actions and is thus bound.

* The man who regards himself as superior or inferior to others because of his wealth, degrades himself. A wealthy man becomes proud of his wealth and pride is the root of demoniac endowment. All the evils and sins are born of pride.

Link:–The Lord in this chapter from the first verse to the fifteenth verse (in three sub-topics) has described the tree of creation i.e., the world, the embodied soul and God in detail. Now while concluding the topic He in the next two verses calls them respectively the perishable, the imperishable and the Supreme Person.

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च।
क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते॥ १६॥

dvāvimau puruṣau loke kṣaraścākṣara eva ca
kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭastho'kṣara ucyate

There are two kinds of Puruṣas in the world, the perishable and the imperishable. All bodies of beings are called perishable and the unchanging (the soul) is called imperishable. 16

Comment:

'Dvāvimau puruṣau loke kṣaraścākṣara eva ca'—Here the term 'Loke' stands for the entire world. In the seventh verse of this chapter the term 'Jīvaloke' also stands for the world.

The world is divided into two aspects (categories) the perishable objects such as the body etc., (the insentient) and the imperishable soul (the sentient) which resides in the body. It is because of the soul that the life-breath and the body function. As soon as life-breath with the soul leaves the body, the body stops functioning and it starts to rot. People burn the body because the body is useful only so long as the soul resides in it. It means that it is the soul rather than the body which is significant.

All the objects such as the body etc., made of the five subtle elements — earth, water, fire, air and ether, are insentient and perishable. The physical body has its identity with the physical world; the subtle body consisting of the ten senses, five vital airs, the mind and the intellect (these seventeen) has its identity with the subtle world while the causal body (nature, impressions of the actions, ignorance) has its identity with the causal world (Nature). They are called 'Kṣara' because they are perishable.

In fact there is nothing as individual; but when a person regards a little portion of the world as his own, he says that it is individual. The body and other objects seem different from the world because of a man's attachment to them, otherwise they are one and the same. In fact all objects and actions belong only to Nature*. Therefore all the actions with the physical, subtle and causal bodies are to be performed for the welfare of the world only, not for one's own self.

The term 'Akṣaraḥ' stands for the imperishable soul which never undergoes any modification†. Nature is insentient

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* If a striver regards the objects and actions as the world's, it means he follows the path of action; if he regards them as Nature's, he follows the path of knowledge; if he regards them as God's, it means he follows the path of devotion. They may be of the world or of Nature, or of God, they are not one's own.

† In the Gītā the perishable (Kṣara), the imperishable (Akṣara) and the Supreme Person (Puruṣottama) have been described by different names as follows:

Chapter-Verse	Kṣara (perishable)	Akṣara (imperishable)	Puruṣottama
7/4-6	Aparā prakṛti (lower Nature)	Parāprakṛti (higher Nature)	Aham (I)
8/3-4	Adhibhūtaḥ (elements)	Adhyātmaḥ (Self)	Brahma (the Supreme)
	Karma (action)	Adhidaiva (Self)	Adhiyajña (the Lord)
13/1-2	Kṣetra (field)	Kṣetrajña (knower of the field)	Mām (Me)
14/3-4	Mahadbrahma (Nature)	Garbha (germ) (seed)	Aham (I) Pitā (father)
	Yoni (womb)	Bīja (seed)	

(Matter) while the soul being a fragment of God, is sentient.

The term 'Kṣaraḥ' used in the verse stands for the peepul tree in the form of the world which should be cut off as is mentioned in the third verse while 'Akṣaraḥ' is the soul, a fragment of God as is described in the seventh verse.

In Gītā for each of the Kṣara, Akṣara and Puruṣottama, different words belonging to all the three genders have been used on different occassion. It means that Nature, the soul and God are neither women, nor men nor eunuchs. They are free from the restrictions of genders.*

In order to show the superiority of 'Puruṣottama' (the Supreme Person) the Lord has used for both 'Kṣara' (perishable) and Akṣara (imperishable) the term 'Puruṣa' (person).

'Kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni'—Here the term 'Kṣara' stands for the tree in the form of the universe, as described at the beginning of the universe, which is without end or origine or foundation and which according to the Lord should be cut off with the strong axe of non-attachment.

Here the term 'Bhūtāni' stands for all the three physical, subtle and causal bodies because the bodies rather than the soul are perishable.

'Kūṭastho'kṣara ucyate'—The Lord here has called the soul 'Akṣara' (imperishable) while in the seventh verse He called It His eternal fragment.

The soul may acquire any body or may go to any world but ever remains uniform without undergoing any modifications (Gītā 8/19; 13/31). Therefore, here It has been called 'Kūṭastha' (immutable or unchanging).

In the Gītā both God and the soul have been described possessing the same characteristics. God (in 12/3) has been called 'Kūṭastha' (unchanging) and (in 8/4) 'Akṣara' (imperishable) while here the soul has been described as 'Kūṭastha' (unchanging) and 'Akṣara' (imperishable). Both of them have identity in essence and embodiment.

The soul is ever uniform and according to the non-dualistic principle is the same as God but becomes the embodied soul by identifying Itself with Nature and its evolute body etc.

उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः ।
यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः ॥ १७ ॥

uttamaḥ puruṣastvanyaḥ paramātmetyudāhṛtaḥ
yo lokatrayamāviśya bibhartyavyaya īśvaraḥ

But other than these (Kṣara and Akṣara) is the Supreme Person called the Supreme Soul, Who, as the indestructible Lord, enters the three worlds and sustains them. 17

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* In the Gītā the perishable (Kṣara), the imperishable (Akṣara) and the Supreme Person (Puruṣottama) have been used in all the three genders. For example—

(1) Kṣara —
Kṣaraḥ (15/16) — masculine gender
Aparā (7/5) — feminine gender
Mahadbrahma (14/3-4) — neuter gender

(2) Akṣara —
Jīvabhūtaḥ (15/7) — masculine gender
Jīvabhūtām (7/5) — feminine gender
Adhyātmam (8/3) — neuter gender

(3) Puruṣottama —
Bhartā (9/18) — masculine gender
Gatiḥ (9/18) — feminine gender
Śaraṇam (9/18) – neuter gender

Comment:

'Uttamaḥ puruṣastvanyaḥ'—The Lord having described two kinds of persons the perishable and the imperishable, now mentions that other than these is the Supreme Person*.

Here the term 'Anyaḥ' (other) has been used for God in order to explain that He is not only different from the imperishable soul but also possesses a unique character. So the Lord in the eighteenth verse declares that He transcends the perishable and is even higher than the imperishable. The soul in spite of being a fragment of God is attracted towards the perishable. So God has been called unique and other than the soul.

'Paramātmetyudāhṛtaḥ'—The term 'Paramātmā' stands for the Supreme Person and also denotes attributeless God, the Supreme Soul, the Soul of all beings. In this verse both the term 'Paramātmā' and 'Īśvara' have been used which means that God without attributes or with attributes is one and the same 'Puruṣottama'.

'Yo lokatrayamāviśya bibhartyavyaya īśvaraḥ'—That Supreme Person permeates (enters) the three worlds equally.

Here the term 'Bibharti' means that God sustains all beings but the soul by an error having assumed Its affinity for the world i.e., people etc., holds that It sustains beings and then It has to suffer in vain.†

The Lord is called 'Avyayaḥ' (a + vyayaḥ = no spending or expenditure) because in spite of sustaining all the world He incurs no expenditure; He has no shortage. He ever remains uniform.

The term 'Īśvaraḥ' stands for God with attributes and it means the controller.

A Vital Fact

Though parents sustain or nourish the child yet the child does not know the fact. Similarly God nourishes all beings yet an ignorant person (having not an eye on God) does not realize this fact. But the devotee who has taken refuge in Him knows it very well that only God sustains all beings.

As far as sustenance of beings is concerned, God is impartial to the devotee and the non-devotee, the sinner and the virtuous, the believer and the non-believer etc., equally ‡. It is very well. known to all that in the universe created by God the sun equally provides heat and light to all beings, the earth provides space to all beings , the gastric fire equally digests food of all beings, air is equally available to all beings for breath, food and water satisfy all beings equally and so on.

Link:–The Lord having described His identity with the Supreme Person now discloses His secret when He declares:–

यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।
अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ १८ ॥

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* (1) Brahma (the Absolute) is the Supreme Imperishable Person, superior to Brahmā, the creator; unrevealed, limitless in whom both knowledge and ignorance are established. The perishable matter is known as ignorance while the imperishable soul is known as knowledge. The Supreme Lord Who controls both knowledge and ignorance is different from both of them and is totally unique (Śvetāśvataropaniṣad 5/1).

(2) Nature is perishable while the soul, the embodiment of nectar Which enjoys Nature is imperishable. The Lord controls these two (the perishable and the imperishable) (Śvetāśvataropaniṣad 1/10).

† The question of sustenance arises only in the path of devotion rather than in the path of knowledge because in the former path a man (the soul) is regarded as different from God. Therefore this topic should be regarded as the topic of devotion.

‡ God showers His grace equally on all beings without any distinction of caste, form, riches and age of beings and without thinking whether they deserve praise or blame.

This great cloud in the form of the innerself is the enjoyer of the inner feelings. Does a cloud while providing rain think whether the receiver is the tree Mimosa catechu or Michelia champacca (Prabodhasudhākara 252-253) ?

yasmātkṣaramatīto'hamakṣarādapi cottamaḥ
ato'smi loke vede ca prathitaḥ puruṣottamaḥ

As I transcend the perishable and am even higher than the imperishable, I am declared to be the Supreme Person in the world and in the Vedas. 18

Comment:

'Yasmātkṣaramatīto'ham'— Here the Lord declares that the perishable (Nature) is kaleidoscopic while He remains the same without undergoing any modifications. So He transcends the perishable.

The senses are superior to the body, superior to the senses is the mind, superior to the mind is the intellect (Gītā 3/42). In spite of the superiority of one to the other, the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect are insentient and belong to the same class. But God transcends all of them as He is sentient while all of them are insentient.

'Akṣarādapicottamaḥ'— Though being a fragment of God, the soul (the imperishable) has Its identity with God, yet here the Lord declares that He is superior even to the soul. How? There are two reasons (1) The soul in spite of being a fragment of God assumes Its affinity for the perishable Nature (Gītā 15/7) and is deluded by the modes of Nature while God (being beyond Nature) never gets deluded (Gītā 7/13). (2) God, subduing His own Nature, manifests Himself (incarnates) (Gītā 4/6) while the embodied soul being under compulsion by Nature streams forth into being (Gītā 8/19). (3) God ever remains untainted (Gītā 4/14; 9/9), while the embodied soul has to attain the state of untaintedness (Gītā 4/18; 7/14).

When the Lord declares that He transcends the perishable and is even higher than the imperishable, He also means to mention that the perishable and the imperishable are also different. Had they not been different, the Lord would have declared, "I transcend the perishable and the imperishable or I am higher than the perishable and the imperishable." It proves that the imperishable also transcends the perishable and is higher than it in the same way as God transcends the perishable and is higher than the imperishable.

'Ato'smi loke vede ca prathitaḥ puruṣottamaḥ'—Here the term 'Loke' stand for the scriptures in which God is celebrated as 'Puruṣottama' (Supreme Person).

The term 'Veda' means pure knowledge which is beginningless. The same knowledge was revealed serially in the form of the Vedas such as the Ṛk and the Yajuḥ etc. In the Vedas God has been declared as 'Puruṣottama'.

The Lord in the preceding verse declared "Other than the perishable and the imperishable is the Supreme Person." So here He discloses the secret that He is the Supreme Person celebrated as 'Puruṣottama'.

An Important Fact

(1) The entire universe is perishable while the soul, the fragment of God is imperishable. Though the imperishable transcends the perishable and is higher than it, yet the former has committed a blunder by assuming its affinity for the latter. The body like the flowing water of a river is flowing continuously while the soul like a fixed rock ever remains immovable and detached. The body of childhood changes into the body of boyhood but 'I' ever remains the same. But we can't say which day the childhood got extinct and the boyhood commenced. Had the imperishable been kaleidoscopic and perishable, there would have been any question of its birth and death. But in spite of being uniform and imperishable it assumes Its affinity for the kaleidoscopic and the perishable and so It is born and it dies. In order to get rid of this birth and death the perishable (body etc.) should be used in rendering service to the world to such an extent that the body becomes manure in the world-garden. God has bestowed upon a man objects such as human body etc., to render selfless service to others rather than to

pay claim on them. Therefore it is the duty of a man to use them in the service of others. To regard them as his own is a blunder. (2) In the fifteenth chapter the Lord first described the perishable Peepul tree in the form of the world. Then He inspired Arjuna to cut off this tree and take refuge in the Supreme Person. Afterwards He described the soul and mentioned It as His fragment. Then (from the twelfth verse to the fifteenth verse) He explained that the light (splendour) in the sun, the moon and the fire is His; permeating the earth He supports all beings and having become the gastric fire He digests food; He is seated in the hearts of all; He is the source of memory, knowledge and the ratiocinative faculty; He is to be known by the Vedas; He is the author of the Vedānta and knower of the Vedas. Having mentioned His supreme power the Lord in this verse reveals the secret of secrets that He, Lord Kṛṣṇa, sitting before him is the Supreme Person.

Lord Kṛṣṇa by His special grace disclosed His identity to Arjuna like a father who tells his son his secret treasure or like an officer who discloses his identity to the person who is seeking him.

Link:—The Lord now in the next verse concludes the topic of unswerving devotion, mentioned in the twenty-sixth verse of the fourteenth chapter, for attaining which the world, the soul and the Supreme Person have been described in details in this chapter.

यो मामेवमसम्मूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम्।
स सर्वविद्भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत॥ १९॥

yo māmevamasammūḍho jānāti puruṣottamam
sa sarvavidbhajati mām sarvabhāvena bhārata

He who undeluded, thus knows Me, the Highest Person, is the knower of all and worships Me with all his being (heart), O Arjuna. 19

Comment:

'Yo māmevamasammūdhaḥ'—The soul is an eternal fragment of God. When It realizes Its real affinity for God, it means that It is undeluded.

Delusion is the stumbling block to the real knowledge of the world or of God. The reality about a thing can be known only when a man has neither attachment nor aversion to it. This attachment or aversion is delusion.

When a man knows the world in reality, he (the self) realizes his identity with God and when he knows the reality about God, he realizes that he (the self) is different from the world. It means that he renounces his assumed affinity for the world having known the reality about the world, and realizes his real affinity for God having known the reality about God.

A man can possess unswerving devotion only when he does not assume his affinity for the world.

'Jānāti puruṣottamam'—The man who is totally free from delusion knows that God is the Highest (Supreme) Person.

He who regarding the Supreme Person as the Supreme Lord Who transcends the perishable, has an inclination to Him and considers Him his own, he knows Him really the Supreme Person.

He who comes to know that the whole power or influence or splendour that is either seen or heard in the world is God's, his attraction towards the world totally perishes. If there is the least attraction to the world, it means that he has not firmly assumed the existence of God or His power.

'Sa sarvavidbhajati mām sarvabhāvena bhārata'—For him who knows God as the Supreme Person having no doubt or confusion, nothing remains to be known and so the Lord calls him the knower of all*.

* O gentleman! He who knows God Who is imperishable is ominiscient and such a person enters the Supreme Lord. (Praśnopaniṣad 4/11).

Nothing remains to be known for the person who has known God even if he is illiterate or less educated.

Such a person who knows the Supreme Person is the knower of all and he worships God with all his being (heart).

When a person knows that God transcends the perishable, his mind (attachment) deviates from the world and is concentrated on God and when he knows Him higher than the imperishable, his intellect (faith) is absorbed in God.*

Then God is worshipped through each of his inclinations and actions. Thus worship to God with all heart is 'unswerving devotion.'

So long as a man is attached to the mundane objects such as the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., he cannot worship God with all his being because a man has an automatic inclination to the object he is attached to.

When a striver accepts the fact 'I am God's and only God is mine', God is automatically worshipped by him with all his being. Then all the activities (sleeping, waking, speaking, walking, eating and drinking etc.) are under taken by him in order to please God rather than for himself.

As 'knowing' plays an important role in the path of knowledge, so does assumption play an important role in the path of devotion. Firm assumption free from doubt is 'knowing' (knowledge) in the path of devotion. When a devotee assumes that God is the Supreme Person, he worships Him with all his being (heart) (Gītā 10/8).

When a person holds that God is the Supreme Person, he becomes the knower of all; then there is no doubt that the person who worships God with all his being will know Him as the Supreme Person.

Link:–According to the principle of Arundhatī philosophy (moving from the gross to the subtle) the Lord first described the perishable, then the imprishable and finally the Supreme Person. He also proved Himself to be the Supreme Person. Now in the next verse He explains the purpose of this description.

इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयानघ ।
एतद्बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान्स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ॥ २० ॥

iti guhyatamaṁ śāstramidamuktaṁ mayānagha
etadbuddhvā buddhimānsyātkṛtakṛtyaśca bhārata

Thus this most secret science (doctrine) has been taught by Me, O sinless one. By knowing this, a man becomes wise and all his duties are fulfilled, and what was to be acquired is acquired, O Arjuna. 20

Comment:

'Anagha'—Arjuna has been called sinless as he is free from carping (cavilling) spirit. Cavilling is a sin which defiles the mind. He who is free from the cavilling spirit deserves devotion.

A secret is disclosed only to the person who is free from the cavilling spirit†. If the secret is disclosed to the person who cavils, it may have a contrary effect on him i.e., he may find fault even in the speaker that the latter eulogises himself and deludes others. Thus the man who cavils may have a downfall.

A man cavils because of his pride. Actually a man suffers from the defect he is proud of. So he starts seeing that defect in others: As soon as a man is proud of his virtues, he starts finding fault with others; and when he finds faults with others, he is proud of his virtues.

If the Lord calls Himself the Supreme

* The mind is concentrated on the object or topic it is attached to and the intellect gets absorbed in it if there is faith (belief).

† In the first verse of the ninth chapter Lord Krsna promised Arjuna that He would declare to him who did not cavil the greatest secret. Here in the fifteenth chapter also the most secret doctrine has been taught by the Lord. So here the term 'Anagha' stands for the person who does not cavil.

Person before a man who cavils, he will not belive Him. He will rather think that He is boastful and so He is praising Himself.

Those who cavil at God have a downfall. Therefore God and saints don't disclose the secrets to those who cavil and who are without faith (Gītā 18/67). In fact the profound secrets are not uttered before those who cavil.

Arjuna has been addressed as 'Anagha' because the most profound secret has been revealed before him as he does not cavil.

'Iti guhyatamaṁ śāstramidam'—The expression 'Iti, idam' (thus, this) denotes the perfection of the topic of the perishable, the imperishable and the Supreme Person described from the first to the nineteenth verses of the fifteenth chapter after describing the unswerving devotion in the twenty-sixth verse of the fourteenth chapter.

In this chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa, having described the perishable (world) and the imperishable (soul) explained His splendour, power and influence (from the twelfth to the fifteenth verses). Then He disclosed the secret that He is the Supreme Person Who transcends the perishable and is higher than the imperishable.

God incarnates like an actor in a play. He plays the role of a human being in such a way that the ignorant people don't know Him (Gītā 7/24). They think that He is a common mortal, like other ordinary human beings, who is born on account of the force of actions of the previous birth. Generally an actor in a play does not disclose his identity. But the Lord in this chapter (in the eighteenth verse) has disclosed His identity by declaring that He is the Supreme Person. Therefore the chapter has been called the most secret.

In the 'Śāstra' generally there is the description of the world, the soul and God (the Supreme Person). As there is the description of all these three in the fifteenth chapter, this chapter has been called 'Śāstra.'

Though the Gītā is the gist of all the 'Śāstras' i.e., the scriptures, only this chapter has been called 'Śāstra' (the scripture). As in this chapter there is preeminently the description of 'Puruṣottama' (the Supreme Person), this chapter has been called the most secret doctrine (science). In this chapter there is the description of six methods of knowing Him.

(1) To know the reality about the world (Verse 1).

(2) To take refuge in God having renounced this assumed affinity for the world (Verse 4).

(3) To perceive Him as established in the self (Verse 11).

(4) To know Him through the study of the Vedas (Verse 15).

(5) To worship Him by all one's being (heart) by regarding Him as the Supreme Person (Verse 19).

(6) To know the most secret doctrine of the whole chapter (Verse 20).

It is appropriate to call this chapter 'Śāstra' because easy methods for God-Realization have been described in this chapter.

'Mayā uktam' —The Lord declares that this most secret doctrine has been taught by His special grace by Him, the Supreme Person Who is the illuminator and base of the entire world, Who is seated in the hearts of all, Who is to be known by the Vedas and Who is higher than the perishable and the imperishable. No one can describe Him in the way He has described Himself because first any one can know Him by His special grace only and then he can describe Him to some extent while He can give a real description of Himself as His knowledge is perfect.

In fact no one else except God can know Him perfectly (Gītā 10/2, 15). In the thirty-ninth verse of the sixth chapter Arjuna said to Lord Kṛṣṇa, "No one else than Thyself can dispel my doubt." Here the Lord seems to declare that there is no question of doubt about the doctrine which He has taught to him.

'Etadbuddhvā buddhimānsyāt-kṛtakṛtyaśca bhārata'—In whole of this chapter the Lord has described the reality about the world, the nature of the soul and the matchless influence and secrecy about Himself. So the term 'Etat' denotes all this (or specially what has been described in the nineteenth verse). He who knows this most secret doctrine is wise i.e., for him nothing remains to be known because he has known the Supreme Person Who is worth knowing.

Having known God, a man's delusion is destroyed. Without knowing Him, even having known all arts, scripts, sciences and languages etc., a man remains deluded because all mundane knowledges are perishable and imperfect. All of them spring up from God. So how can they illumine their source God? Even if ignorant of worldly knowledges as described above, if he realizes God, then he is really a man of knowledge.

The devotee who is undeluded, who worships Him with all his being (heart) and who is the knower of all as described in the nineteenth verse has been called here wise.

Here the term 'Ca' denotes that nothing remains to be gained (acquired) for the devotee who worships God with all his being i.e., with unswerving devotion as described in the preceding verse. "There is no gain equal to devotion" (Mānasa 7/112/4). Therefore nothing remains to be gained by the devotee who has attained devotion.

For him who knows God either through the path of action or of knowledge or of devotion, nothing remains to be done, to be known and to be gained by him and his human life is successful.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुन-संवादे पुरुषोत्तमयोगो नाम पञ्चदशोऽध्यायः ॥ १५ ॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde puruṣottamayogo nāma pañcadaśo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ, Tat, Sat, the names of the Lord, in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavadgītā, the knowledge of Brahma, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, this is the fifteenth discourse designated:

"The Yoga of the Supreme Person".

Having understood the topic discussed in this chapter in the right perspective a striver realizes his eternal union with the Supreme Person (God). So this chapter has been designated: "The Yoga of the Supreme Person".

Words, letters and Uvāca (said) in the Fifteenth Chapter

(1) In this chapter in **'Atha pañcadaśo'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are three words, in **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** there are two words, in verses there are two hundred and eighty-eight words and there are thirteen concluding words. Thus the total number of words is three hundred and six.

(2) In **'Atha pañcadaśo'dhyāyaḥ'** there are eight letters, in **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** there are seven letters, in verses there are seven hundred and one letters and there are forty-six concluding letters. Thus the total number of words is seven hundred and sixty-two. In this chapter out of the twenty verses each of the second, the fourth, the fifth and the fifteenth verses is of forty-four letters, the third verse is of forty-five letters while each of the remaining fifteen verses is of thirty-two letters.

(3) In this chapter **'Uvāca'** (said) has been used once and that is **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'.**

Metres Used in the Fifteenth Chapter

Out of the twenty verses of this chapter the second, the third and the fourth—these three verses are of **'upajāti'** metre; the fifth and the fifteenth—these two verses are of **'indra-vajrā'** metre. Out of the remaining fifteen verses in the first and third quarters of the seventh verse 'ra-gaṇa' being used there is **'jātīpakṣa-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the ninth verse and in the third quarter of the twentieth verse 'ra-gaṇa' being used there is **'ra-vipulā'** metre; in the third quarter of the eighteenth verse 'ma-gaṇa' being used, there is **'ma-vipulā'** metre and in the third quarter of the nineteenth verse 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'na-vipulā'** metre. The remaining ten (1,6,8, 10-14, 16-17) verses are pssessed of the characteristics of right **'pathyāvaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

Śrī Hariḥ

SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

Introduction

Lord Kṛṣṇa in the fifteenth verse of the seventh chapter explained in brief the traits of the person possessing the demoniac nature by declaring that those evil doers who are foolish and who have embraced the demoniac nature don't worship Him; while in the sixteenth verse He explained in brief those possessing the divine nature by declaring that those virtuous men worship Him. In the beginning of the eighth chapter Arjuna put seven questions based on the last two verses of the seventh chapter. The Lord answered those questions in whole of the eighth chapter.

The Lord at the beginning of the seventh chapter had promised that He would unfold to him the knowledge together with Realization. So He started the ninth chapter. In the twelfth verse of the ninth chapter He explains that the senseless persons with vain hopes, futile actions and fruitless knowledge embrace a nature which is demoniac while in the thirteenth verse He declared that the great souls, who know Him as the prime cause of creation and worship Him constantly with undivided mind, possess a divine nature. Then the Lord upto the eleventh verse of the tenth chapter described the topic of knowledge along with Realization.

After the eleventh verse of the tenth chapter the Lord should have described the divine and demoniac natures in detail but Arjuna having been influenced by His grace offered praises to Him and prayed to Him to tell him His divine glories. While explaining His divine glories the Lord in the last verse of the tenth chapter declared, "What need is there, O Arjuna, for the detailed knowledge? I stand supporting the whole universe with a single fragment of Myself." So Arjuna at the beginning of the eleventh chapter out of curiosity prayed to the Lord to reveal to him that cosmic form.

Having revealed to Arjuna His cosmic form, the Lord in the fifty-fourth and the fifty-fifth verses of the eleventh chapter explained the merits of exclusive devotion and the traits of such a devotee. So in the first verse of the twelfth chapter Arjuna inquired, "Who are considered to be superior those who are properly engaged in Your devotional service or those who worship the Imperishable and the Unmanifested?" Therefore the Lord in the twelfth chapter described the devotees who are properly engaged in His devotional service and described the attributeless supreme Brahma in the thirteenth chapter and upto the twentieth verse of the fourteenth chapter. In the twenty-first verse of the fourteenth chapter Arjuna asked, "What are the marks of him who has risen above the three Guṇas (Modes)? What is his conduct? How does he transcend the three modes?" In response to his questions the Lord explained exclusive devotion, the means to rise above the three modes i.e., He gave a hint of divine nature through exclusive devotion and of demoniac nature through adulterated devotion. He started the fifteenth chapter in order to explain how to develop exclusive devotion.

In the third verse of the fifteenth chapter there is a mention of cutting down this tree with the weapon of detachment (i.e., renunciation of attachment) which is a mark of divine nature. In the fourth verse there is description of the divine nature in the expression "I seek refuge in the Primal Person." It means that those who don't seek refuge in Him are of demoniac nature. In the nineteenth verse there is the description of divine nature when the Lord declares, "The undeluded person who thus knows Me as the Supreme Person, worships Me with his whole being." It means that those who don't worship Him are of demoniac nature.

Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa could not get an opportunity to explain in detail the divine and demoniac natures because Arjuna went on putting questions. Now He gets an opportunity to explain the divine and demoniac natures in detail. So He starts the topic.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।
दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥ १ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca
abhayaṁ sattvasaṁśuddhirjñānayogavyavasthitiḥ
dānaṁ damaśca yajñaśca svādhyāyastapa ārjavam

The Blessed Lord said:

Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in Yoga for knowledge, charity, self-control, sacrifice, study of the scriptures, austerity and straightforwardness. 1

Comment:

[The Lord in the nineteenth verse of the fifteenth chapter declared, "The undeluded person, who thus knows Me as the Supreme Person, worships Me with his whole being." It means that he worships the Lord with exclusive devotion. Thus when a devotee has the only aim for God-Realization, divine nature is revealed in him naturally. Therefore the Lord in the first three verses describes the divine nature pertaining to sentiments, conduct and glory.]

'Abhayam'*—Nervous excitement caused by the thought of losing something which is agreeable and meeting with something which is undesirable is called fear. Total absence of this sort of fear is fearlessness.

Fear can be of two types (1) External (2) Internal.

(1) External: — (a) A man is afraid of thieves, robbers, lions and snakes etc., because he identifies himself with the body. But when he realizes that he is different from the perishable body, he has no fear.

The fear caused by giving up bad habits of smoking and drinking and leaving the company of the friends addicted to vices, is because of one's own cowardly nature. This sort of fear is removed by abandoning cowardice.

(b) A person is afraid lest he should act against the will of parents, teachers and saints and against the ordinance of the scriptures. In reality this is no fear. This sort of fear leads to fearlessness. Actually this sort of fear is desirable for a striver because it leads him to spiritual progress.

(2) Internal: — (a) When a man wants to perform forbidden actions which involve sin, injustice and atrocity etc., he is full of fear. He performs such evil deeds so long as he assumes his affinity with the body and wants to maintain the body and to gain honour, pleasure and prosperity etc.† But when he realizes that the only aim of human life is God-Realization‡ he is freed from evil deeds and forbidden actions and he becomes totally free from fear.

(b) When a man is engaged in evil deeds, he is full of fear. For example human beings, gods, demigods and devils were afraid of Rāvaṇa but when he abducted Sītā, he was filled with fear. Similarly there was no effect of the sound of the musical instruments such as conchs etc., of the eleven Akṣauhiṇī army of the Kauravas on the Pāṇḍavas army (Gītā 1/13),

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* The Lord mentions fearlessness as the first quality because he who worships the Lord with his whole being by taking refuge in Him becomes totally fearless (Vālmīki Rāmā. 6/18/33).

† In mundane pleasures there is fear of diseases, in high family there is fear of downfall, in riches there is fear of the king, in honour there is fear of destitution, in power there is fear of enemy, in beauty there is fear of agedness, in the scriptures there is fear of debate, in virtues there is fear of evil persons and in the body there is fear of death. Thus all the worldly things are full of fear, it is only dispassion which is free from fear (Bhartṛharivairāgyaśatakam).

‡ The Aim of human life is decided before this human life is bestowed upon us. We have to realize that aim, rather than to decide it.

but when the musical instruments of the seven Akṣauhiṇī army of the Pāṇḍavas blared forth, their sound rent the hearts of the Kaurava army (Gītā 1/19). It means that the hearts of those who commit sins and do injustice become weak and so they are filled with fear. But when a person having given up injustice etc., purifies his feelings and conduct, his fear disappears.

(c) So long as a human being does not do what is worth doing, does not know what is worth knowing and does not gain what is worth gaining, he can't be totally fearless, fear subsists in him.

The more a striver believes in God and the more he depends on Him, the more fearless he becomes. He thinks that he being a fragment of the Lord, is imperishable and so there is nothing to be afraid of while the bodies and the worldly objects are decaying and perishing every moment. By having this discrimination fear perishes and a striver becomes totally fearless.

By accepting affinity for the Lord, a person has no attachment to the body and family etc. Having been free from attachment a man is not afraid of death and he becomes fearless.

'Sattvasaṁśuddhiḥ'—Purity of mind or purity of heart is 'Sattvasaṁśuddhi'. When a person is detached from the world and is attached to the Lord, his heart is purified. As soon as he decides the aim of his life as God-Realization, his heart becomes pure because the aim of the attainment of the perishable things causes impurity in the form of sin, distraction and obscurity (ignorance). In the scriptures actions without the desire for their fruit, worship and knowledge respectively have been said to be the means to do away with this threefold impurity. The best means to purify the heart or the mind is that it should not be regarded as one's own.

In order to do away with one's sins there is no need of expiation. A striver should follow the spiritual path zealously and promptly. By doing so his sins will perish and his heart will become pure.

A striver has a notion that spiritual activities such as devotion and adoration etc., are different from profession such as business etc., viz., these are two different divisions. He holds that foul means such as falsehood and fraud etc., have to be adopted in practical life, in business etc. This sort of attitude makes the heart very impure. So a striver does not advance in the spiritual sphere quickly. Therefore a striver should be cautious that he has not to incur any sin.

When a crime is committed by an error, the striver holds himself responsible for it. So his heart becomes impure. He should determine never to commit that error again. Similarly he holds other persons responsible for doing evil to him. He should forgive those persons voluntarily and should pray to God to forgive them because he has received the fruit of his past actions, those persons have become only the instrument. By doing so the heart or the mind is purified.

'Jñānayogavyavasthitiḥ'—It is inevitable for a striver to be fixed in Yoga in order to have true knowledge of God whether He is endowed with attributes or He is attributeless. Yoga means equanimity (evenness of mind) in gain and loss, honour and dishonour, praise and blame etc.

'Dānam'—'Dāna' (charity) consists in giving away the so-called one's own things in a disinterested manner, as a matter of duty to others according to the place, time and circumstances etc. A piece of land, a cow, a piece of gold, grain and a piece of cloth can be offered as charity. Out of them the foremost place goes to the charity of grain. But charity in the form of fearlessness is superior even to it. It can be divided into two classes.

(1) To make a man fearless when he is in difficulties and troubles by helping him according to one's power and resources.

(2) To free an entangled man from the cycle of birth and death by narrating the life story of the Lord*, the publication of the sacred text such

* O Lord, the nectar of Your life history provides life and peace to the distressed beings. The great souls describe it by heart. It destroys all the sins and causes auspiciousness. The saints have described it in detail. Those who narrate it on the earth, they are specially charitable to the world i.e., they do the greatest good to the world (Śrīmadbhā. 10/31/9).

as the Gītā, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Bhāgavata, their sale at a cheap rate, deliverance of divine discourses and to enable him to attain salvation. The Lord is very much pleased with this sort of service (Gītā 18/68-69). This service is the best of all the other charities. But while holding the divine discourses the speaker should not regard himself as superior to others. He should think that the Lord in the form of the audience is giving him an opportunity to make proper use of his time.

A striver should offer the charity with the feelings that the Lord Himself has offered the charity by making him a tool. So he should offer it to the needy persons with the feeling that it is his duty to offer their gifts to them.

'Damaḥ'—'Dama' consists in controlling one's senses. One should not perform any forbidden action with senses, body and mind. The actions should be performed according to the ordinance of the scriptures by renouncing selfishness and pride,for the welfare of others. By doing so senses are controlled, attachment and dependence come to an end and one's body and senses act in a pure manner.

When a striver's aim is sense-control, he discharges his duty by performing actions which are sanctioned by the scriptures. Thus he becomes free from pride, attachment and desire etc. Thus he is purified and his senses are controlled.

'Yajñaḥ'—It means offering daily oblation to the sacred fire. Performance of 'Balivaiśvadeva' (offering a portion of the daily meal to creatures) according to one's caste is also sacrifice. Besides it, from the view-point of the Gītā performance of one's duty according to one's caste, social order (stage of life) and circumstances is also sacrifice provided it is for the welfare of others and is free from selfishness and pride. In addition to them one's profession, daily routine, obedience to parents, teachers and elders, reverence to cows, Brāhmaṇa (the persons of the priest class), gods and the Lord is also sacrifice provided there is no desire for the fruit.

'Svādhyāyaḥ'—'Svādhyāya' includes chanting of the Lord's name and study of the sacred books such as the Gītā, the Bhāgavata, the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata etc. In fact 'Svādhyāya' means the proper study of one's dispositions and situation viz., introspection. A striver should be very cautious. He should not judge his progress through the changing propensities. Actually these dispositions (propensities) always undergo modifications, they appear and disappear. So should a striver not purify them? He should surely purify them. They can be easily and quickly purified when a striver ceases to regard them and the inner sense as his own. To regard them as one's own is impurity at the root. The self being a fragment of the Lord is pure it has never tainted. The affinity with dispositions veils self-realization. If we don't feel happy in good dispositions and sad in evil dispositions and never treat these dispositions as our own, by snapping total connection with them, we can have self-realization.

'Tapaḥ'—Austerity consists in suffering hardships such as hunger, thirst, cold, heat and rain etc., knowingly tolerance of hardships happily, while discharging one's duty and earning one's livelihood, is real austerity* because it destroys sins and provides power of toleration.

A striver should not use his austerity in granting boons, in calling down curse, in doing evils to others and in satisfying his desires. But he should use it happily in developing power in order to face the obstacles which hinder his spiritual progress. It is also austerity. During the course of spiritual practice several hurdles come to his notice. He thinks that in seclusion and congenial atmosphere the spiritual practice can be easily successful. Not to desire such circumstances viz., not to depend on them is also austerity. A striver should never

* The best austerity consists in welcoming the situation according to favourable or unfavourable circumstances which are caused by the past actions.

deem his spiritual progress dependent on favourable circumstances. Instead of having a yearning for favourable circumstances, he should make the best possible use of the cirumstances that are available, and go on progressing spiritually. He should try to seek seclusion. But if it is not available, he should be engaged in spiritual practice happily and zealously by regarding the available circumstances as God's gift.

'Ārjavam'—A striver should be straightforward and simple in his dealings without attaching importance to what the people think of him. He should be upright and simple in order to attain salvation even though people regard him as a fool. Such a person free from fraud attains salvation. He should harmonize his thoughts, words and deeds because the thoughts, words and deeds of the great souls are harmonized while those of the vile are different.

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम्।
दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम्॥ २॥

ahiṁsā satyamakrodhastyāgaḥ śāntirapaiśunam
dayā bhūteṣvaloluptvaṁ mārdavaṁ hrīracāpalam

Non-violence, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquillity, aversion to fault finding, compassion to living beings, freedom from covetousness, gentleness, modesty and steadiness (absence of fickleness). 2

Comment:

'Ahiṁsā' (Non-violence)—Infliction of pain or injury on any being through body, mind, speech or feeling etc., is violence. Non-injury is known as non-violence. When a person instead of having an inclination for the world, has an inclination only for the Lord, he observes non-violence in the true sense of the term. But he who has desire and attachment to enjoy the worldly pleasures and also enjoys them, can't be free from violence. He degrades himself and also destroys the sense-objects which he enjoys. He who enjoys limited worldly enjoyments considering them as his own does violence. It is also violence to regard worldly objects which have been bestowed upon us for the service of the world as ours. But the person who uses the available resources and persons in the service of the world, without having any attachment to them, becomes free from violence.

When a person enjoys the worldly pleasures with a selfish motive, he inflicts pain on those needy people who suffer shortage because they feel miserable and agonised when they see the former's enjoyments. Thus he commits violence. It is because of his selfishness and enjoyments that he does not care for the interest of others. But the great souls (saints), who satisfy the bare necessities of their life in order to do welfare to others, commit no sins or violence (Gītā 4/21). Even then a person may feel aggrieved because of his mean mentality and evil nature when he sees those great souls satisfying their necessities.

A striver who is devoted to God never enjoys sense-objects and so he never commits violence. He never inflicts the least pain on any one through his body, mind or speech. He is ever engrossed in the welfare of all beings without causing pain to any one even mentally. If any one becomes a stumbling block in his spiritual path, he is neither angry with him nor does he think of doing evil to him. He being sad invokes the Lord to remove the stumbling block. But he has neither anger nor envy nor jealousy against the person who created an obstacle to his spiritual progress. He becomes rather more prompt and more

alert because of his inclination towards God. If he bears malice towards the person who creates an obstacle, this is his obstinacy in his discipline and this shows his lack of promptness in his practice.

In a striver there are two traits— 1-Promptness 2-Insistence. The former proves that he relishes the spiritual practice while the latter shows that he is attached to the spiritual practice. Due to relish he comes to know of his deficiency and he develops power to remove that deficiency and makes an attempt to remove it. But when there is attachment, there is possibility of the feeling of malice against the person who creates a hurdle. The fact is that if anybody creates an obstacle, it is because of the striver's lack of relish. In case his relish is not lacking, no body will create any hindrance, but he will become indifferent to the striver thinking that the latter is obstinate and so will not mend his ways.

As a flower emits sweet fragrance automatically, so do spiritual molecules emanate from a striver and the environment is purified. His feelings and activities naturally are conducive to the welfare of all beings. Thus he perpetrates non-violence. But he who pollutes the environment through his evil feelings and bad conduct, commits the evil of violence.

'Satyam'—Truth consists in speaking agreeable words honestly and faithfully of what has been heard, or seen or experienced for the welfare of others by giving up selfishness and pride. A striver remains true through his mind, speech and actions because his only aim is to realize the Truth namely God.

'Akrodhaḥ'—The excitement caused in the mind to do evil to others is anger. This burning sensation of the mind finds outer expression in the form of the burning sensation in the body. Freedom from anger is 'Akrodha'.

A striver having God-Realization as the aim of his life, is not angry even with those who do him wrong. He thinks that he is receiving the fruit of his wrong actions in the form of pain or unfavourable circumstances. Those persons have become instrument in purifying him of his sins. They are rather his benefactors who are warning him to be careful in future. They are just like a surgeon who performs an operation on a diseased part to make it healthy.

A striver is not angry with those who destroy his virtues by praising and serving him. He thinks that he does not deserve praise or service, it is out of their good and virtuous nature that they do so. His virtues are not destroyed because he does not enjoy their praise or service etc., i.e., he does not derive pleasure out of them.

'Tyāgaḥ'—Real renunciation consists in having a detachment from the world. A striver should have external as well as internal renunciation. He should renounce sinful, unjust and evil actions and should not enjoy worldly pleasures. Besides it he should renounce the desire for the perishable worldly things and objects etc., from his heart. Renunciation of desire from the heart is superior to outword physical renunciation. Renunciation leads to immediate peace (Gītā 12/12).

The desire for the perishable is the main obstacle to his spiritual progress. When a striver instead of having the aim of gaining worldly pleasures and prosperity, has the only aim for God-Realization, his desires go on disappearing. The more he renounces desires the more he advances spiritually.

'Śāntiḥ'—Absence of distractions which evolve out of attachment and aversion is tranquillity or placidity. A striver remains tranquil in unfavourable circumstances also by thinking that they destroy sins and purify his inner sense, while favourable circumstances eat away virtues and there is every possibility of degradation rather than of progress.

If by chance his tranquillity is disturbed out of attachment or aversion, he at once becomes cautious that being a striver he should not be affected either by attachment or aversion. Thus tranquillity is regained and with the passage of time it is fixed.

'Apaiśunam'—Exposing of the faults of others is 'Paiśuna' and total absence of this tendency is 'Apaiśuna'. When a man has the aim of God-Realization, he does

not expose the faults of others. The more and more a striver spiritually advances, the more his feelings of malice and back biting are lessened and pure feelings develop. The feeling of pride does not haunt him. He does not regard any one inferior to him because he knows that no one has any affinity with Matter (Nature), the affinity is only assumed. So how can he expose the faults of any one?

A striver following the Discipline of Devotion, beholds the Lord pervading everywhere, a striver following the Discipline of Knowledge remains established in the self i.e., beholds the self while a striver following the Discipline of Action serves others without having any desire, attachment or aversion. So how can a striver find fault with others and expose their faults?

'Dayā bhūteṣu'—The urge to relieve a being of his suffering is 'Dayā' (compassion). The Lord, the saints, the strivers and common men all possess this urge of compassion but it is of different types.

(1) The Lord's compassion: — The Lord showers His compassions on all beings in order to purify them. The Lord's compassion is of two types—(a) To create unfavourable circumstances to purge them of their sins is 'Kṛpā'. (b) to create favourable circumstances is 'Dayā.'

(2) The saints compassion: — The saints are sad and happy with the sadness and happiness of other beings. Their mercy is pure and holy. In fact they are neither grieved through their own suffering nor through the sufferings of others. They behold the Lord's grace in their own unfavourable circumstances. They bear the sufferings of others in order to make them happy. Indra, the king of gods beheaded the innocent sage Dadhīci out of anger. But when Indra demanded his bones for his own safety, the latter sacrificed his life and gave his bones to the former. Thus they sacrifice their life in order to do good to others even though other persons do wrong to them. Similarly Karṇa offered his skin and Śibi offered his flesh for the welfare of others like the clouds which offer their life for the good of others.

(3) Strivers' compassion:—A striver tries his best to remove the sufferings of other beings. His heart melts when he sees sufferings of others. He has the feeling that all should be liberated, all should get bliss, no one should suffer. His mind is filled with these sentiments. He also makes efforts for the same. But he does not feel elevated in anyway by doing so. When he beholds people performing sinful actions, he instead of being angry with them, takes pity upon them and tries his best to save them from sins. He also prays to God to free them from their sins. He thinks and acts for their welfare. By finding himself weak he invokes the Lord "O Lord, let them be relieved of their sufferings and be Your devotees."

(4) Compassion of common men:—A common man pities other persons with the feeling that he is very kind and good. He considers himself superior to others and expects to receive honour and praise etc., as the reward of his compassion. He shows mercy with the feeling of vanity. In that mercy the element of mercy is good while the feeling of pride is impurity.

There are other common men who pity only those who belong to their family, sect or religion etc. This sort of mercy is more impure because of the feeling of mineness and partiality. Those who pity others for their selfish motive are even inferior to them.

Thus compassion of common people is impure.

'Aloluptvam'—The attraction of the senses towards the objects of senses when they come in contact, or when one sees other beings enjoying them is 'Loluptvam'(Covetousness) and the total absence of this sort of covetousness is 'Aloluptvam' (Freedom from covetousness).

The means to be free from covetousness:

(i) A striver should neither enjoy the worldly pleasures nor be proud that he has controlled the senses.

(ii) He should always think that his aim is God-Realization. If sometimes he feels any kind of attraction or excitement, he should

invoke the Lord.

"O Lord, save me, protect me".

(iii) He should not see the lustful actions of living beings. If they appear, he should think that they are the gateways to hells and eighty-four lac forms of lives. But he has to be free from the cycle of birth and death and attain salvation.

'Mārdavam'—Lack of sternness viz., mildness of mind even for those who have feelings of enmity towards him and who trouble him is 'Mārdavam'*.

A striver is mild and gentle even to the evil-doers. He tries his best to be mild in feelings and speech for all beings. Sometimes strivers following different paths as of Action, Knowledge and Devotion may not appear equally mild in their dealings but all of them are very mild at heart.

'Hrīḥ'—'Hrīḥ' is shame or hesitation felt in the performance of actions contrary to the ordinance of the scriptures and the society either in loneliness or in company. When a striver changes his egoism and accepts that he is a devotee or a striver whose aim is God-Realization, he hesitates in performing forbidden actions.

'Acāpalam'—Absence of fickleness is 'Acāpalam'. If any one is fickle, it doesn't mean that the work is done quickly by him. When a person of the mode of goodness performs an action with steadiness and patience, by giving up fickleness, it is performed properly and promptly. When the work is done well, he becomes free from anxieties and worries. In absence of fickleness, there is no evil of procrastination. As he has no desire besides performing his duty, his mind does not get bewildered and volatile (Gītā 18/26).

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।
भवन्ति सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥ ३ ॥

tejaḥ kṣamā dhṛtiḥ śaucamadroho nātimānitā
bhavanti sampadam daivīmabhijātasya bhārata

Vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, freedom from malice and excessive pride-these, o descendant of Bhārata, are the marks of him who is endowed with divine nature. 3

Comment:

'Tejaḥ'—The power (vigour) of the great men and strivers (endowed with divine traits) whose company enables the sinners to renounce their sins and be engaged in virtuous actions, is called 'Teja'. The evil-doers hesitate in performing evil deeds before those great men and strivers. These evil-doers suddenly change their nature and get engaged in virtuous deeds before the men of divine traits. In the face of a man of anger, also other persons have the feeling of fear in acting against his will this is the upshot of anger.

'Kṣamā'—He who is endowed with the virtue of 'Kṣamā' (Forgiveness)† tolerates the offence of others without having any inclination to retaliate, although he is strong enough to take vengeance. A man may forgive his near and dear ones because of his attachment to them but this sort of forgiveness is not pure. Similarly a man may forgive a cruel or a strong person out of fear and he may forgive an officer for the latter's harsh and abusive language out of selfishness. But this is not real forgiveness. A person who possesses real forgiveness thinks that the wrong-doer should never be punished here or hereafter.

A person may ask for forgiveness in two ways:–

(1) A person asks for forgiveness having

* 'Ārjavam' is used when there is prominence of the body while 'Mārdavam' is used when there is prominence of the mind.

† What is the difference between 'Akrodha' (Freedom from anger) and 'Kṣamā (Forgiveness)? When a person is endowed with forgiveness, he has an eye on the offender that he should not be punished, while in 'Akrodha' (Freedom from anger) he has an eye on himself that he should be free from anger and burning sensation. Forgiveness includes 'freedom from anger' while 'freedom from anger' does not include forgiveness. Thus both of them are different.

done someting wrong in order to escape punishment.

(2) A person asks for forgiveness having done something wrong with the intention that he will never do wrong. This sort of forgiveness leads to progress.

Now the question arises how to inculcate forgiveness. The answer is that if a person does not expect any reward for his actions from others nor does he wish to do wrong to the wrong-doers, the virtue of forgiveness develops in him.

'Dhṛtiḥ'—The unwavering steadiness or fortitude by which one remains balanced in favourable and unfavourable circumstances is 'Dhṛti' (Gītā 18/33).

In the mode of goodness a man possesses the virtue of fortitude, while he loses it in the mode of passion and ignorance. A striver who decides the aim of his life, neither gets disheartened in calamities nor is overwhelmed with joy in prosperity. He does not divert his attention to the adverse and favourable circumstances. He wants to attain the goal with unwavering steadiness like a pilgrim who on his pilgrimage to Badrīnārāyaṇa does not care for favourable or unfavourable circumstances but moves ahead patiently and promptly to reach his destination.

'Śaucam'—Purity is of two kinds external and internal*. The striver having the aim of God-Realization, maintains, external purity because it leads to internal purity, while a person who has internal purity cannot tolerate external impurity. Patañjali has said that a striver having internal purity hates his body and does not desire to mix with others. It means that when a striver maintains the purity of his body by clay and water etc., he realizes that all bodies are impure and so other bodies have no attraction for him, i.e., his desire to derive pleasure out of the contact with bodies perishes.

The external purity is of four kinds: — (1) of the body (2) of speech (3) of family (4) of money

(1) Physical purity: — Heedlessneṣs, laziness and fashions etc., make the body impure while promptness, activity and simplicity etc., purify the body. It is also achieved by means of clay and water etc.

(2) Purity of speech: — False, idle, bitter and slanderous talk makes the tongue (speech) impure. The speech devoid of these evils but having true, agreeable, beneficial and necessary words which lead to spiritual progress of all persons, families, castes, streets and countries is pure.

(3) Purity of the family:—Imparting good education to children for their welfare, teaching good conduct, impartiality and discharging one's duty with justice and sincerity — this is purity of the family.

(4) Purity of money: — Money is purified through just and honest dealings, keeping in mind the welfare of others giving it to those who are poor, needy and destitute and protecting cows, women and Brāhmaṇas. Moreover it is purified by serving the great saints and sages and by getting the sacred books published for the sale at a cheap rate so that there may be publicity of their teachings.

When a person has the only aim of God-Realization, he himself is purified and then his body, speech, family and money are purified. When the body is purified, the atmosphere also becomes purer and a person realizes that the body is the abode of impurities and filth and it is perishable. So he can easily renounce his egoism and attachment. Thus the external purity leads him to God-Realization.

'Adrohaḥ'—Absence of malice or hatred or grudge even towards those who behave as enemies is called 'Adroha'†. A person having the propensity of malice or hatred wants to take revenge upon the wrong doer as and when he gets an opportunity. But how can a striver whose aim is God-Realization think of injuring others by having a grudge against them? A striver following the Discipline of Action performs actions for the welfare of all, a striver following the Discipline of Knowledge regards everyone as his own self, while a striver following the Discipline of Devotion, beholds

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* Here the term denotes external purity because internal purity has already been discussed in the first verse of this chapter.

† There is difference between 'Krodha' (anger) and 'Drohaḥ' (malice).
The burning sensation caused in the mind for the wrong-doer is 'Krodha' while the feeling of enmity to take revenge upon him is called 'Drohaḥ'.

his Lord in everyone. So how can he have malice or hatred for anyone?

'Nātimānitā'—'Mānitā' denotes pride and 'Atimānitā' denotes excessive pride. A proud man thinks that he is superior to other common people and so he is worthy of being honoured by them, while a very proud man is he who considers himself worthy of being honoured even by his teachers and parents etc., who should be adored by him. Total negation of this pride is called 'Nātimānitā'.

This pride or superiority is of two kinds:– (i) Mundane: – A man regards himself as superior to others in wealth, knowledge, rank, caste, qualities and social order (stage of life) etc., and thinks that he is worthy of being honoured by others. (ii) Spiritual:– When some divine traits are revealed in a striver, he considers himself superior to other persons and other persons also praise and honour him. But he considers himself superior so long as he has some demoniac traits. When he is endowed only with divine traits, he is not proud of his divine traits, he becomes free from pride.

So long as ego persists a striver perceives some speciality in him. The more this egoism is purged, the more the feeling of speciality vanishes. In the long run in the absence of self-conceitedness, the divine trait of 'Nātimānitā' (freedom from pride) is revealed in him.

A striver should have the aim to arouse divine nature fully in him. Due to variance in natures in different persons, variance in virtues remains. But the lack of virtue pinches the striver. So by depending on God he should go on making efforts to root out the demoniac traits. By doing so by God's grace the divine nature is revealed in him.

'Bhavanti sampadam daivīmabhijātasya bhārata'—These are the marks of him who is endowed with divine nature. When a person fixes his aim as God-Realization, the divine nature is revealed in him. Some divine traits are also aroused because of the latencies of past births. But a striver does not regard those divine traits as his own but he thinks that the Lord has bestowed upon him those divine traits by His grace. So he is not proud of them.

Actually the divine nature is not personal, it belongs to the Lord. Had it been personal, a person would have possessed it for ever. But it is not so. When a person regards it as his own, he has pride which is a mark of the demoniac nature. This pride gives birth to all the other traits of demoniac nature. If a person possesses only the divine traits, he can't be proud of them. He is proud of them only when he is endowed with demoniac nature. Suppose a man is proud of his true speech, it means he also tells a lie besides speaking the truth. Thus a man is proud of his divine traits regarding them as his own and by having demoniac traits in him. When virtues in totality are inculcated, there can't be any pride of those virtues.

The divine nature denotes the Lord's property. So when a devotee depends on Him only, His divine nature is naturally revealed in him. Lord Rāma in the Rāma-caritamānasa declares to Śabarī that a man or woman or creature that has any one of the nine kinds of devotion to Him is very loving to Him.

All the moving and the unmoving creatures such as human beings, gods, ghosts and evil spirits, beasts and birds, moths, insects and creepers etc., have a desire to live alive to maintain their life breath. This desire denotes demoniac nature.

Even a detached and dispassionate striver has a latent desire to live. But he has no covetousness for sense-objects as his aim is only God-Realization rather than to nourish the body.

But when he develops his devotion to God, He becomes dearer to him than even his life-breath and he addresses Him as 'the Lord of life-breath' or 'Dearer than life-breath' etc. He can even die because he can't bear separation from God. He sacrifices even his life happily for Him in the same way, as a chaste wife at the death of her husband burns herself on her husband's funeral pyre willingly and happily.

It means that when a devotee develops exclusive devotion to God, he is no more attached to his life, his demoniac nature totally comes to an end and divine nature is spontaneously revealed in him. Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsa has also mentioned in the Rāmacaritamānasa that internal filth can never be removed without the water of devotion.

Link:–Having described the marks of the person endowed with divine nature the Lord now in the next verse discusses in brief the marks of one who hankers after worldly pleasures and prosperity and is endowed with demoniac nature.

दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च ।
अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थ सम्पदमासुरीम् ॥ ४ ॥

dambho darpo'bhimānaśca krodhaḥ pāruṣyameva ca
ajñānaṁ cābhijātasya pārtha sampadamāsurīm

Hypocrisy (ostentation), arrogance, pride, anger, harshness and ignorance: these are the marks, O Pārtha (Arjuna), of him who is endowed with demoniac nature. 4

Comment:

'Dambhaḥ'—'Dambha' consists in making a show of one's virtues in order to gain honour, fame and praise etc., even when one does not possess those virtues. It can be of two kinds:—

(i) A person may pose as a righteous, virtuous, scholarly, wise person even though he has no such virtues. To show more than he possesses, to show himself as an ascetic in spite of being sensuous and ostentation in feelings and actions—this is hypocrisy. (ii) He may conceal his good conduct and may eat forbidden food and perform forbidden actions in the company of evil persons in order to win respect and praise by pleasing them.

When a person attaches too much importance to the body, life-breath, wealth, property, honour, praise and fame, he pretends to be what he is not i.e., hypocrisy is revealed in him.

'Darpaḥ'—It means arrogance, pride of possessions of riches, property, family, rank and position etc., is known 'Darpaḥ'. Because of this feeling a man is proud of the things he possesses.

'Abhimānaḥ'—A man has pride because of his 'egoism'. A person regards himself superior and exalted because of the superiority of his physical (gross), subtle and causal bodies. He regards himself superior to others because of his high caste, high social order (Āśrama), learning, influence and accomplishment (Siddhis such as Aṇimā, Mahimā and Garimā etc.). Because of this egoism (pride)* he thinks he can cause topsyturvydom in the entire world.

'Krodhaḥ'—The excitement or the burning sensation caused in the mind in order to do wrong to others is 'Krodha' (Anger). It appears when some one does something against a man's wishes. There is difference between 'Krodha' (Anger) and 'Kṣobha' (Agitation, commotion). When a child does a mischief and does not obey its parents, they scold it out of 'Kṣobha' so that it may not do mischief again, while in anger there is the tendency to do wrong to the person with whom one is angry.

A man has to repent for the wrong actions which he performs overpowered by anger. When he is angry, he harms not only others but also himself. Moreover he can do wrong to others only if they have to suffer it as the fruit of their wrong actions. But he commits a sin and spoils his nature. His spoiled nature will

* Out of the two terms 'Abhimāna' (Pride) and 'Darpa' (Arrogance) if one is used, it includes the other term also. But when both are used together independently 'Abhimāna' denotes the feeling of superiority, because of the internal qualities (egoism) while 'Darpa' because of the external possessions (attachment).

mislead him to hells and painful forms of lives.

Anger is the foremost enemy of a person because it, abiding in the body, destroys the body in the same way as fire abiding in wood burns the same wood. Everyone including the nearest and the dearest one is afraid of the angry man. In the twenty-first verse of the chapter, anger has been called as the gateway to hell. When a man's desire is not fulfilled, anger ensues. From anger arises delusion; from delusion confusion of memory; from confusion of memory, loss of reason; and from loss of reason one goes to complete ruin (Gītā 2/62-63).

'Pāruṣyam'—It means harshness or sternness or total negation of mildness. Swaggering or walking with an arrogant air is the bodily harshness. Seeing with harsh eyes is harshness of eyes. Speaking bitter, taunting and harsh words constitutes harshness of speech. Getting pleased without helping other creatures in their adversity is harshness of heart. Vengeance is harshness in dealings.

A man with a selfish motive wants to fulfil his desire by fair means or foul without thinking of the troubles of others. So there remains harshness in his mind, speech, body and behaviour. Out of selfishness he even commits violence without thinking of its consequences. With the predominance of self-interest a man even commits violence. Thus he develops cruelty in his nature. With cruelty, the serenity of his heart goes away. In absence of serenity his dealings become harsh. Thus he engages himself in extorting money and harassing others without caring for the result.

'Ajñānam'—Here 'Ajñāna' denotes ignorance or lack of discrimination. An ignorant man can't distinguish the real from the unreal, the virtue from the sin and the duty from the forbidden actions because he hankers after the perishable worldly pleasures and prosperity without thinking of the consequences. Such ignorant people like beasts are given to nursing their life. What ought to be done and what ought not to be done—they can't know and they don't want to know.

He regards the momentary pleasures which are born of sense contacts as real pleasures and so he makes efforts to enjoy them. But their fruit is contrary. Instead of pleasures he gets pain.* Even then he is not warned. He performs forbidden actions in order to get honour, praise, comforts, wealth and property etc. But their fruit is disastrous for him as well as for the entire world.

'Abhijātasya pārtha sampadamāsurīm'—O Pārtha, these are the marks of the person who is endowed with demoniac nature†. A person by identifying himself with the body has desire to live alive for ever and enjoy worldly pleasures. The marks of demoniac nature are seen in such a person.

In the fortieth verse of the eighteenth chapter the Lord declares that there is no creature which is free from the three modes of nature. It proves that every person in spite of being a fragment of the Lord is born having affinity with Nature (Prakṛti). He has the affinity of 'I'ness with the body, the evolute of Nature; and the affinity of 'Mineness' with the things, objects and persons etc., the evolute of Nature. This feeling of 'I'ness or 'Mineness' is the fundamental mark of demoniac nature.

A man's relationship with Prakṛti is merely assumed. So he can renounce it. The reason is that he (the self) is sentient and immutable while Prakṛti is insentient and kaleidoscopic. So there is no real relationship between the two, it is merely assumed. As soon as this relationship is renounced, the demoniac nature is rooted out. A man is fully capable in rooting out the demoniac nature.

The more a man is attached to his life-breath, the more demoniac traits he passesses. When demoniac traits are on the increase, he harms others in order to maintain his life-breath and to enjoy

* O King ! people bound by husband-wife relationship etc., perform actions in order to derive pleasure and be free from pain. But those who want to cross the illusion, should think that their actions will bear contrary fruits. Instead of enjoying pleasures, they will suffer pain; and instead of getting rid of the pain, their pain will go on increasing (Śrīmadbhāga. 11/3/18).

† Here the term 'Asura' (Demon) denotes those persons who are engrossed in the pleasures born of sense-contacts. It means that such persons instead of having the aim of God-Realization hanker after worldly pleasures. Such persons are 'Asura' (Demons) and their nature is demoniac nature.

pleasures. He does not even hesitate to commit murder.

When a man regards the temporary as permanent and the unreal as real, all the demoniac traits naturally appear in him without his efforts and they having developed a disinclination for God, mislead him to degradation.

Link:–Now the Lord in the next verse tells the fruits of both the divine and the demoniac natures and cheers Arjuna by declaring that he is born with the divine nature.

दैवी सम्पद्विमोक्षाय निबन्धायासुरी मता ।
मा शुचः सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातोऽसि पाण्डव ॥ ५ ॥

daivī sampadvimokṣāya nibandhāyāsurī matā
mā śucaḥ sampadaṁ daivīmabhijāto'si pāṇḍava

The divine nature is conducive to liberation and the demoniac to bondage. Grieve not, O Pāṇḍava (Arjuna), thou art born with divine endowments. 5

Comment:

'Daivī sampadvimokṣāya'—When a striver is inclined towards the Lord with a firm determination, he develops a disinclination for the world. With this disinclination the evil propensities of the demoniac nature decrease and the good qualities of the divine nature are revealed. So he gets interested in the Lord's name, form, sport (pastime), virtues and life history etc.

The firmer a striver is in his aim, the more easily his real affinity which has been since time immemorial with the Lord is revealed to him and his assumed affinity with the world perishes. Actually he has no connection with the world, he has assumed his connection through his identification with the body. He regards the body as 'I' and also as 'mine'. As soon as he renounces this assumed affinity, the divine nature which leads to salvation will be revealed in him.

This divine nature is conducive not only to one's own liberation but also to the liberation of all beings. The Lord has bestowed this human body so that a person may lead all the beings to salvation in the same way as the head of a family rears the entire family. This human being has been given such a right by the Lord that by serving Him he can even control Him. A striver should perform all the virtuous actions such as austerity, charity, sacrifice, pilgrimage, fast, chanting, meditation, study of the sacred books and good company for the salvation of the numberless beings of infinite universes and should pray to God from the core of his heart through these words, "O Lord! Grant exclusive devotion and salvation to all the beings. This is possible only by Your grace. I can only pray You by the intellect provided by You," and should offer his body, senses, mind, intellect wealth and property etc., to the Lord for the salvation of the world*. By doing so he will realize the identity of his possessions with the world and his natural identity with the Lord will be revealed. This has been termed by the Lord by the expression 'the divine nature is conducive to liberation.'

'Nibandhāyāsurī matā'—The demoniac nature is conducive to bondage viz., the cycle of birth and death. So long as a striver does not change his egoism, his virtuous actions will not lead him to salvation, they may lead him to higher regions. It means that so long as he has the desire to maintain his body and to enjoy sense-objects in his ego the divine traits super imposed on himself will not

* The feeling that all beings should attain salvation is the Lord's divine nature, it is not one's own. It is only the Lord Who is one's own.

lead him to salvation, they may bear some pleasant fruit.

The seed of a category grows into the tree and fruit of the same category. Similarly the virtuous actions performed by the striver who has worldly past influences will bear mundane fruit in the form of accomplishments such as 'Āṇimā' and , 'Garimā' etc., and higher regions such as the realm of Brahmā, but they can't lead to salvation (Gītā 8/16).

Now the question arises how a man should attain salvation. The answer is that as a roasted or boiled seed does not germinate, similarly when a striver has the only aim of God-Realization, all the worldly seeds perish, his egoism changes and he attains salvation.

A person has attachment for the body and life-breath that he should go on living happily and enjoying honour, praise and pleasure etc. It is because of this attachment that he can't attain salvation because attachment to the modes of nature is the cause of birth in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21). It means that he being attached to nature (Prakṛti) may go even to the realm of Brahmā but will not be free from bondage.

A Vital Fact

The Lord in this chapter has mentioned three fruits of demoniac nature. Here in this verse He mentions the first fruit as bondage. The worldly minded people who perform actions with a desire for their fruit, as described in the verses from the forty-one to the forty-fourth of the second chapter and also in the twentieth and twenty-first verses of the ninth chapter, also belong to the category of those whose actions are conducive to bondage. The intellect of those who hanker after worldly pleasures and prosperity is many branched i.e., their desires are endless. They perform actions in order to fulfil their desires which result in rebirth (Gītā 2/41-44). Similarly those, who perform sacrifices in order to gain heavenly pleasures, enjoy heavenly pleasures, being purged of their sins which were obstacles to the attainment of heaven, having enjoyed the extensive heavenly world return to the world of mortals on the exhaustion of their merits (Gītā 9/20-21).

Now a question arises that the striver who falls from Yoga (Gītā 6/41) goes by the same path of the dark fortnight as a person, having the desire for the fruit of actions, goes (Gītā 8/25); so the path of the striver who falls from Yoga should be conducive to bondage. The answer is that the striver who falls from Yoga has no bondage because in the previous human life his aim has been to realize God and because of some lust (desire) or unconsciousness or excessive pain he has to go to heaven etc., instead of realizing God. So the term Yogī has been used for them (Gītā 8/25) otherwise persons who perform actions for their fruit can't be called Yogīs.

The second fruit is that people of demoniac nature fall into a foul hell (Gītā 16/16). Those who being overwhelmed with desire commit sins and injustice etc., go to hells such as 'Kumbhīpāka' etc.

The third fruit of demoniac nature is that those evil-doers are hurled into the wombs of demons and then they go down to the most abominable type of existence (Gītā 16/19-20).

'Mā śucaḥ sampadaṁ daivīmabhijāto'si pāṇḍava'—Divine nature leads to salvation while the demoniac one leads to bondage. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains to Arjuna that he is born with a divine nature so that he may not doubt whether he is born with a divine nature or not.

A striver having attained the divine nature naturally follows the path of Action or Knowledge or Devotion. All the sins of a Karmayogī through actions and those of a Jñānayogī through the fire of wisdom are destroyed (Gītā 4/23,37). But the Lord destroys all the sins of the Bhaktiyogī (Gītā 18/66); and delivers him from the ocean of birth and death (Gītā 12/7).

'Mā śucaḥ'—Lord Kṛṣṇa in the third verse addresses Arjuna as 'Bhārata', in the

fourth verse as 'Pārtha' and in the fifth verse as 'Pāṇḍava' in order to encourage him. By addressing him as Bhārata He means to say that he belongs to an excellent family; by addressing him as Pārtha he wants to say that he is the son of Pṛthā (Kuntī) who served even those who had the feeling of enmity towards her, and by addressing him as Pāṇḍava he wants to emphasize that he is the son of a righteous and noble father Pāṇḍu. Thus because of his excellent family and noble and virtuous parents he possesses a divine nature. So he should not grieve.

In the Gītā the Lord has used the expression 'Mā śucaḥ' (Grieve not) two times, once here and once in the sixty-sixth verse of the eighteenth chapter. The Lord by using it two times wants to assure him that he should not worry either about the means or the end. He possesses the means as he is endowed with the divine nature (16/5) and he need not worry about the end because He will liberate him from all sins (18/66). The Lord through the medium of Arjuna assures all strivers that they need not lose heart by thinking that they don't possess virtues and so they will not be liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

The persons who possess a divine nature always think of attaining salvation in favourable as well as unfavourable circumstances. When Lord Kṛṣṇa placed the chariot between the two armies, Arjuna, seeing all his relations there, was filled with compassion and sadness and he expressed his reluctance to fight. He thought that sin would accrue to him by killing his kinsmen in the war. Thus he was filled with attachment or delusion for the family which is the demoniac nature and also thought of the fear of sin, an obstacle to salvation, which is divine nature.

According to Arjuna it was a sin to resolve to fight (1/45). Time and again he asked Lord Kṛṣṇa to tell him his duty so that he could attain to the highest good or salvation because he was confused (2/7, 3/2, 5/1). This shows his divine nature. On the contrary Duryodhana etc., the members of the rival army saw no sin in the destruction of the family (1/38). So Arjuna possessed the divine nature from the very beginning. Attachment or delusion, the demoniac nature was a temporary phase of his life which was destroyed through the Lord's grace (18/73). So here Lord Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna not to grieve.

Arjuna does not feel that he is endowed with the divine nature. So Lord Kṛṣṇa says to him. "Grieve not because you are endowed with divine nature." The reason is that noble men don't behold virtues in them when they become totally free from vices. As the collyrium applied to the eyes can't be seen by the eyes because it identifies itself with the eyes, similarly those possessing the divine nature become one with it, so the divine traits can't be seen separately to them. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa assures Arjuna that he possesses the divine nature naturally, so he need not worry.

A Vital Fact

The Lord by His grace has bestowed this human body so that a man may attain salvation. This body is transitory and perishable and nothing is certain about it, it may die any moment. So a man should develop divine nature and renounce demoniac nature.

The term 'Deva' in 'Daivī sampadā' denotes God. Being a fragment of God, a man possesses divine nature naturally. But when he (soul) having a disinclination for God, has an inclination for Prakṛti (Nature) i.e., he identifies himself with the perishable body etc., demoniac nature manifests itself in him and all the evil propensities such as lust, anger, greed, delusion hypocrisy, envy and jealousy etc., sprout in him. The desire to maintain the life breath happily is an important mark of a man of demoniac nature.

The liberated souls are totally free from the demoniac nature while all the other beings possess both the divine and the demoniac nature (16/6). Being a fragment

of God every person possesses the divine nature but sometimes because of the predominance of the demoniac nature, the divine nature is concealed.

It can't perish because the real never ceases to be. So far as liberated souls are concerned, they are totally free from demoniac traits.* So a person can never be totally cruel, sinful, vile and corrupt. Even the vilest sinner possesses virtues to some extent. As soon as the divine nature manifests itself, the demoniac nature comes to an end because the divine nature is imperishable as it belongs to the Lord, while the demoniac nature is perishable because it belongs to the world.

A man, being a fragment of God Who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, has a desire to live, to know and to be happy. But he wants to live with the body, wants to know with the intellect and wants to be happy with the help of the body and senses. He wants to fulfil these desires through the perishable world.

Thus because of his attachment to the life breath he possesses demoniac nature †. There is one vital point which needs special attention. He has a desire to live, it means that he (soul) can live alive. He (soul) being a fragment of the Lord is imperishable but by having affinity of 'I'ness and mineness with the body he assumes the death of the body as his own death. Similarly he wants to be wise with the help of the intellect and he has a desire to be happy and maintain his name and fame even after the death by identifying himself with the body. But the intellect and the body are perishable and insentient while he (soul) is imperishable and sentient. So how can the perishable (unreal) and insentient provide knowledge (wisdom) and happiness to the imperishable (real) and the sentient? So when he is connected with the unreal, he, in spite of being an embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, has desires to live, to gain knowledge and to be happy. He wants these desires to be fulfilled by the perishable world. Thus the demoniac nature is manifested in him. But when he renounces his affinity with the unreal, the demoniac nature perishes and divine nature is revealed in him.

When a person wants to develop divine traits in him by making efforts through devotion, meditation, good company and study of the sacred books etc., as a part of his duty, he can't develop them fully because whatever is gained by efforts is not natural but is artificial. Moreover he develops pride that he has developed these virtues by his efforts. This pride is a demoniac trait which is the root of all evils and which nourishes evils. Pride persists in the spiritual practice which is done by efforts. When he fails in cultivating the divine traits, he accepts that it is out of his control. But when he realizes that attachment to the perishable is the root of the demoniac nature, he renounces this attachment. In that case the divine nature reveals itself in him because he being a fragment of God automatically possesses it.

There is one more vital point which needs attention. A man can't totally renounce divine traits. How to know this fact? If a man decides to speak the truth, he can speak the truth throughout his life. But if he decides to tell a lie even for a day, he can't do so. If someone asks him whether he is hungry, and so he tells a lie by saying that he is not, he will have to face a lot of difficulty. But if a person takes an oath to tell a lie even if he dies, his oath will prove to be true. Similar is the case with other divine traits because all of them are eternal and natural. A striver has only to renounce attachment to the perishable because attachment to it is assumed, not natural.

Demoniac nature is unnatural, it appears and disappears while divine nature is natural.

* The liberated souls being detached from the perishable get established in imperishable God. Being established in the real (God), virtues automatically prevail in them. These perfected souls rise above the divine traits which are ideal for strivers.

† When a man identifies himself with the body he is attached to the life-breath by having the desire to live happily. This identification gives breath to the demoniac nature. Therefore the embodied who are mentioned in the Gītā by the terms 'Dehavadbhiḥ' (12/5) and 'Dehinam' (3/40; 14/5,7), should be included among those who possess demoniac nature.

If a man possesses bad conduct, everybody asks him why he is behaving in a bad manner. But no one asks him the reason why his conduct is good.

Arjuna specially possessed divine nature. So Lord Kṛṣṇa asked Arjuna whence this unmanliness came upon him (2/2-3). It means that this unmanliness (impotence) was not naturally present in him. So Arjuna asks Lord Kṛṣṇa the means to attain to the highest good or salvation (2/7; 3/2; 5/1) even in the battle-field. It shows that Arjuna possessed the divine nature otherwise how could he reject the offer of Urvaśī, a heavenly damsel outright? Therefore assuring Arjuna, Lord Kṛṣṇa asks him not to grieve because he is born with a divine nature (16/5).

The feeling of egoism is born out of the identification of the real with the unreal. A man performs virtuous or evil actions having egoism. When he follows the spiritual path, there remains predominance of the real in egoism, while there is predominance of the unreal when he follows the mundane path. Divine nature is revealed in a person when there is predominance of the self and demoniac nature goes on aggravating in him during the predominance of the nonself. This human body has been bestowed upon him in order to enable him to be free from the demoniac nature. Every human being is independent and powerful to get rid of it. It is because of a person's affinity with the perishable that he can't get rid of it.

A man (soul) identifies himself with Matter. Actually there is no desire in a man (pure soul), the desire abides only in the unreal portion of ego. But the soul is said to be the cause of the experience of pleasure and pain (13/20). Actually the soul is not the cause but the soul seated in nature becomes the experiencer (13/21). Actually the unreal (insentient) undergoes modifications such as pleasure or pain. But because the real (sentient) has identifiction with the unreal. So the real has to experience pleasure and pain. As after marriage the wife's needs become the husband's needs, similarly the soul by identification with the body and thus assuming itself as the doer has to become the experiencer of pleasures and pains while all actions are performed by nature (3/27, 13/29). In the identification when a man has a desire for God-Realization, there is predominance of the sentient (real) but when he has a desire for the mundane, there is predominance of the insentient. The predominance of the sentient gives birth to the divine nature while the predominance of the insentient gives birth to the demoniac nature. The sentient in spite of its identification with the insentient has a desire for the truth, consciousness and bliss. All the worldly desires are included in these three desires (to live for ever, to know all and ever to remain happy). But the man commits an error that he wants to satisfy these desires by the insentient (world).

The sentient has assumed its identification with the insentient and it has also accepted the demoniac nature. The sentient ever remains uniform without undergoing any modification while nature (the insentient) undergoes continuous modifications. If the self (sentient) does not assume its affinity of 'I'ness and mineness with nature, it is free. Thus affinity of the sentient with Matter and the demoniac nature born of this affinity are one's own creation. Had demoniac nature been in the self it must have not perished because the self is imperishable; and no question would have been raised to renounce the demoniac nature. In spite of being perishable it appears to be imperishable because of its affinity with the imperishable. Therefore a man can renounce the demoniac nature and can realize God (16/22).

As soon as a man inclines towards God, the sins of his millions of births (the demoniac traits) perish. The reason is that he has accumulated these sins by assuming his affinity with nature. The result of this assumed affinity is that he has to take birth in good and evil wombs (13/21). Actually he neither acts nor gets contaminated (13/31).

The realization of this truth means to see

inaction in action and action in inaction. It means that he remains detached while performing actions and performs actions remaining detached i.e., he remains detached whether he performs actions or not. Such a man is wise among men (4/18). He who is free from the notion of doership and whose intellect is not tainted i.e., he has no desire, though he slays all people, he does not slay nor is he bound (by his action) (18/17). Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, "By what is a man impelled to commit sin?" Lord Kṛṣṇa replied, "It is desire" (3/36-37) which conduces a man to commit sins. A man by identifying himself with the body has a desire for worldly pleasures and prosperity*. So this attachment to the sentient is the cause of the demoniac nature. If he is not attached to it i.e., he does not attach importance to it, the divine nature is self evident. So Lord Kṛṣṇa assures all the strivers through Arjuna that they should not grieve and worry if they see demoniac nature in them, because they naturally possess the divine nature (Gītā 16/5).

The Lord means to say that a striver should never be disappointed in the spiritual path because being a fragment of God he automatically possesses the divine nature. When a striver has the aim of God-Realization, the divine nature is automatically revealed in him. The Lord has bestowed this human body by His grace so that human beings may realize Him. So if they have no will of their own but identify their will with the will of the Lord, they by His grace attain salvation automatically.

Link:–All beings possess the sentient and the insentient portions. Some of them having a disinclination for the insentient are inclined towards the sentient (God) while some having a disinclination for God hanker after the insentient (pleasures and prosperity). Thus they belong to two different classes which are described in the next verse.

द्वौ भूतसर्गौ लोकेऽस्मिन्दैव आसुर एव च।
दैवो विस्तरशः प्रोक्त आसुरं पार्थ मे शृणु॥ ६॥

dvau bhūtasargau loke'smindaiva āsura eva ca
daivo vistaraśaḥ prokta āsuraṁ pārtha me śṛṇu

There are two types of beings in the world – the divine and the demoniac. The divine has been described at length. Hear from Me, O Pārtha (Arjuna) the demoniac in detail. 6

Comment:

'Dvau bhūtasargau loke'smindaiva āsura eva ca'—The Lord declares that here are two types of beings – the divine and the demoniac. He means to say that all beings have a sentient portion of Him and the other insentient one of Prakṛti (Matter) (Gītā 10/39; 18/40). When the sentient has an inclination for the insentient, a person develops demoniac nature but when he having a disinclination for Matter is inclined towards the Lord, divine nature is aroused in him.

The term 'Deva' denotes God. So all the means which are conducive to God-Realization are known as divine endowments (nature). As He is eternal and imperishable, so are the methods of His realization also eternal (Gītā 4/1).

The term 'Bhūta' denotes – human beings, gods, demons, beasts, birds, insects, moths, plants, creepers, evil spirits etc. But human

* No one wants to be a defaulter because a defaulter is insulted, rejected and blamed by the society here, while hereafter he has to go to hells and take birth in eighty-four lac forms of lives. But a man being overpowered by desire, born of the attachment to the perishable, performs forbidden actions which bear adverse fruit and the man becomes a defaulter and a sinner (against his wish).

beings have discrimination to renounce demoniac nature. So they should renounce it totally. As soon as they remove it, the divine nature is automatically revealed in them.

It is mentioned in the scriptures that human beings possess both the divine and the demoniac natures. Even the cruelest butcher possesses kindness because a person being the fragment of the Lord, possesses divine nature automatically, while he develops demoniac nature in him because of his attachment to the perishable. Strivers who follow the spiritual path from their hearts, feel hurt when they find demoniac nature in them and they also try to get rid of it. But the strivers who in spite of being engaged in devotion and adoration hanker after worldly pleasures and prosperity are not strivers indeed because even the vilest sinner automatically possesses both the divine and the demoniac natures.

A point needs special attention. A person performs actions according to his egoism and his actions strengthen his egoism. 'I am truthful'—this conviction is seated in a man's egoism, and so he speaks the truth and his truth strengthens his egoism that he is true. Thus he can't tell a lie. But a person who regards himself as worldly and hankers after worldly pleasures and prosperity, tells a lie and thinks that in the modern world falsehood is inevitable and indispensable. So having such feelings in his 'egoism' he regards it impossible to get rid of evils and vices.

A man being a fragment of God has virtuous feelings while having the feelings of egoism and attachment he develops evil feelings. But the evil feelings can't destroy the virtuous feelings totally because the latter are real and the real never ceases to be (2/16). On the contrary evil feelings are born of the bad company and whatever is born is surely to perish because the unreal has no existence (2/16). The person whose aim is God-Realization arouses virtuous feelings and performs virtuous actions and so his evil feelings disappear. But he, whose aim is to enjoy worldly pleasures and prosperity, develops evil feelings and performs evil actions, his good feelings are veiled.

The term 'Loke'smin' denotes that a person gets several rights on this earth. On this earth also, India is the most pious land. Even the gods praise those persons who are born in India. They are more lucky than the gods, because the persons are born in India and the gods have a yearning for this good fortune of the human life which the Lord having been pleased with them has offered them. A man can attain salvation only in this human life. So he should arouse divine nature cautiously. The Lord by His special grace has granted this human body. The Lord has also offered him all the resources including discrimination to attain salvation. So the term 'Loke'smin' specially denotes human beings. But the Lord is equally present in all beings (Gītā 9/29). Where there is God, there is His divine nature. So the expression 'Bhūtasargau' has been given. It means that all beings can follow the spiritual path.

The human beings who are absorbed in evil actions are more guilty than those of sinful births — pariah, beasts, birds, insects and moths etc., because the latter being purified of the sins as a result of their past actions are going towards the higher births while the former are degrading themselves by committing new sins. But the Lord declares that even such sinners by worshipping Him with exclusive devotion attain eternal peace (9/30-31). Similarly the most sinful of all sinners, crossing all sins by the raft of knowledge, attain salvation (4/36). It means that when even the vilest sinner can attain salvation, those of sinful births can also attain salvation. So the term 'Bhūta' (beings) has been given.

There are several incidents which show that besides human beings other beings such as birds and beasts etc., also possess

divine nature*. Several dogs are heard observing fasts. At Gorakhpur a black dog accompanied the group of devotees who chanted the Lord's name and sat at the place where divine discourses were held. At Svargāśrama, Ṛṣīkeśa a snake was seen under the banyan tree. A saint asked it to stay and narrated the whole of the Gītā. The snake listened to it calmly. When the text was over, the snake disappeared and was never seen again. Thus birds and animals also possess divine nature because of the past impressions but they unlike the human beings have no discrimination to develop divine traits.

A human being has been bestowed upon this human body so that he may protect all the moving and unmoving beings such as beasts, birds, herbs, plants and creepers etc., and specially the Sāttvika animals, birds and herbs etc., because they develop divine nature in us. The cow is sacred and adorable. Her churned butter is used in sacrifice which causes rain. Rain produces food from which beings come forth. Out of those beings, human beings need bullock for farming. These bullocks are born of cows. Butter and milk of cows nourish our body and mind. So we should protect cow mother. Similarly herbs remove diseases and nourish the body. So we should also protect them so that our life may be pure here and hereafter.

'Daivo vistaraśaḥ proktaḥ'—Lord Kṛṣṇa declares that He has described the divine nature at length. In this chapter He has described the twenty-six marks – nine in the first verse, eleven in the second verse and six in the third verse, of him who is endowed with divine nature. He has also described it in the marks of him who has transcended the three modes of nature (14/22-25), in the twenty virtues of Jñāna (knowledge or wisdom) (13/7-11), in the marks of a God-Realized devotee (12/13-19), in the marks of a Karmayogī (6/7-9) and in the marks of the man of steadfast wisdom (2/55-71).

'Āsuraṁ pārtha me śṛṇu'—The Lord asks Arjuna to hear from Him in detail the nature of the demoniac beings who are given to sensuous life.

Link:–Now the Lord describes the order† of the marks of demoniac nature in the next verse.

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* In Śāntiparva, a section of the epic, Mahābhārata there is a story. Śakunilubdhaka was a hunter who used to kill birds and beasts. One day he could get nothing to eat by hunting. Suddenly the sky was overcast and there was a downpour. So he sat under a tree. In that tree there lived a couple of pigeons. Both of them had flown away to pick up food. The female pigeon flew back earlier because she got drenched. She was shivering and so she fell down. The hunter put her into his cage. The pigeon came back and finding his partner missing began to lament. Hearing his wail she said, "My lord, why are you lamenting? you should discharge your duty by welcoming a guest by removing his cold and satisfying his hunger. I am lying here in the cage." Hearing her words the pigeon gathered dry leaves and wood, brought a burning stick and put it on the dry leaves. The hunter got warmth. He said to the pigeon, "I am hungry. What should I do?" The pigeon said "You are my guest. I shall make arrangement to satisfy your hunger." He thought over it and finding no other remedy, he took three rounds of fire and jumped into it. Seeing his sacrifice, the hunter thought that he was very cruel and sinful while the bird was virtuous. He determined never to commit such sins in future. So he freed the she pigeon. She lamented over the death of her husband and finding herself alone jumped into fire. A celestial car moving in the air arrived and both of the pigeons went to heaven.

Seeing both of them going in the celestial car the hunter threw his weapon and decided to be engaged in devotion and adoration which led him to salvation.

† The human beings possessing a demoniac nature, because of lack of fine breeding, don't know what should be done and what should not be done, what is purity and what is impurity of the body, food, speech and behaviour. They don't know the difference between falsehood and truth. So they become disinclined towards God, Who is truth. Then they don't believe in God, righteousness (Dharma) and don't follow their ordinance. They consider the creation to be evolved through the mutual contact of men and women brought about by lust. Thus these atheists inflict pain on others and themselves suffer a downfall.

Holding fast to this view, these ruined souls of paltry understanding and cruel deeds, not believing in the eternal soul, rise up as the enemies of the world for its destruction. 9

Comment:

'Etāṁ dṛṣṭimavaṣṭabhya'—The people possessing the demoniac nature don't know what to do and what to refrain from. They don't possess either purity or good conduct or truth. They don't believe that there is a Lord who dispenses the fruit of actions of the individual according to their virtues and vices. They hold fast to this atheistic view.

'Naṣṭātmānaḥ'—They don't believe in the existence of the soul. They are materialist. They believe that there is no sentient element as such, it is merely a mixture of the materialistic elements in the same way as the mixture of catechu and lime produces ruddiness. So they are totally disinclined towards the sentient (soul). Thus they are ruined and they lose all chances of attaining self-realization.

'Alpabuddhayaḥ'—Their understanding (discrimination) is feeble. Their intellect is concerned only with the sensual pleasures. They believe in 'eat, drink and be merry'. They can't distinguish between the real and the unreal, virtue and vice, good and bad conduct. They have no conception of the soul or the Supreme Being, as their understanding in spiritual matters is clouded. But their intellect is sharp in amassing wealth and conducing them to worldly pleasures.

'Ugrakarmāṇaḥ'—They perform cruel deeds such as murder etc., because they are not afraid of God and scriptural ordinances. But they are afraid of thieves, robbers and government officers.

'Ahitāḥ'—They are ever engaged in doing evil to others and they derive pleasure out of it.

'Jagataḥ kṣayāya prabhavanti'—They apply their power, prosperity and position etc., for the destruction of other people. They can't tolerate the progress of other people. For their selfish motive they indulge in violence, murder and usurpation etc., without thinking of the pain which they inflict upon others. Such demoniac people kill birds and animals and eat them.

Link:–The evil ways of such atheists, who are filled with insatiable desires, are described in the next verse.

काममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं दम्भमानमदान्विताः ।
मोहाद्गृहीत्वासद्ग्राहान्प्रवर्तन्तेऽशुचिव्रताः ॥ १० ॥

kāmamāśritya duṣpūraṁ dambhamānamadānvitāḥ
mohādgṛhītvāsadgrāhānpravartante'śucivratāḥ

Filled with insatiable desires, full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance, holding wrong views through delusion, they act with impure resolve. 10

Comment:

'Kāmamāśritya duṣpūram'—These people endowed with demoniac nature harbour insatiable desires in their hearts. They believe that without desires a man becomes just like a stone and he can't progress. They don't believe in God, in fortune and in fruits of actions.

How to satisfy those desires? The Lord explains:–**'Dambhamānamadānvitāḥ'**—They are full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance. They pretend to be what they are not in order to gain wealth, honour, praise and prestige etc. This is hypocrisy. 'Māna' or pride consists in regarding one self worthy of honour or adoration because of one's superiority complex. 'Mada' or arrogance consists in remaining intoxicated with one's possessions — intellect, merits, learning, wealth and power etc.

'Aśucivratāḥ'—They make impure resolves such as setting fire to villages and cow pens and murdering people etc. They regard purity of food, conduct, caste and social order (Āśrama) as hypocrisy. They resolve that they will not listen to the name and glories of the Lord and they will not go on pilgrimages and so on.

The robbers have also such resolves because they don't want to rob people of their riches without injuring them.

'Mohādgṛhītvā sadgrāhān'—They embrace wrong ideas through delusion. Delusion consists in conceiving as right what is wrong and following the path contrary to the truth (Gītā 18/32). They don't follow the ordinances of the scriptures, the caste and the family. They go contrary to what is right or good or truthful. Their intellect becomes so mean that they don't consider any duty towards their parents and they indulge in falsehood, fraud and forgery in order to hoard money.

Link:–The Lord in the next two verses explains the feelings, thought and conduct of such atheists.

चिन्तामपरिमेयां च प्रलयान्तामुपाश्रिताः ।
कामोपभोगपरमा एतावदिति निश्चिताः ॥ ११ ॥

cintāmaparimeyāṁ ca pralayāntāmupāśritāḥ
kāmopabhogaparamā etāvaditi niścitāḥ

Obsessed with innumerable cares ending only with death, looking upon the gratification of desires as their highest aim and feeling sure that that is all. 11

Comment:

'Cintāmaparimeyāṁ ca pralayāntā-mupāśritāḥ'—They are beset with innumerable cares, worries and anxieties till they die. So they have to follow the cycle of birth and death.

The cares or worries can be of two kinds – the Spiritual and the mundane. Those, who are worried about their salvation, are noble. But the people possessing a demoniac nature are not beset with spiritual worries. They are obsessed with such cares and worries as how they would maintain honour, praise, fame and prestige etc., how they would live alive, what would happen to their family, wealth and property after their death and so on.

But the fact is that a man is worried out of ignorance. The Lord provides the necessities of life to people according to their fortune. When a person dies, he leaves behind several things and objects unconsumed. Even a dispassionate saint leaves his lion-cloth and the pot of hollowed gourd when he dies. When a rich man dies, his riches are of no avail to him.

There is an anecdote. There was a very rich man. He built a house of steel like the safe because there were so many jewels, ornaments and precious stones etc., in his house. The house could be unlocked with a key. Once he went into the house and shut it but the key was left outside. So he died without food, water and air. Similarly a man suffering from a disease can't enjoy delicious dishes because if he eats delicious foods, he may die.

Even the dispassionate ascetics, who don't possess even a single penny, get the necessities of life according to their destiny. So there is no need for a man to be worried how he will earn his living. Saint Tulasī declares, "The Lord first decided the destiny of a being and then bestowed upon him this human body. So he need not worry, he should adore Him". Similarly another saying goes that the Lord provides cloth, wood and

fire even to the dead body, so if a living man worries about his livelihood, he is very unfortunate. Saint Rāmadāsa also declares, "An ascetic has got neither grain nor any animal (for milk or butter etc.,) nor cash but at the meal-time he receives everything". Those possessing a demoniac nature don't understand this fact. They think that they obtain things because they worry and make efforts and if they don't do so, they may die of starvation.

'Kāmopabhogaparamāḥ'— Those, who look upon the gratification of desires as their highest aim hanker after worldly luxuries and pleasures. They are steeped in enjoying the objects of the senses and in earning money to enjoy them.

'Etāvaditi niścitāḥ'—They believe that the only aim of life is to enjoy worldly pleasures* and prosperity and that sensual enjoyment is the supreme source of happiness. They have no belief in the happiness in another world. According to them this sort of belief is hypocrisy. They don't believe in virtues, vices and rebirth etc. So they want to enjoy as many pleasures here as is possible.

आशापाशशतैर्बद्धाः कामक्रोधपरायणाः ।
ईहन्ते कामभोगार्थमन्यायेनार्थसञ्चयान् ॥ १२ ॥

āśāpāśaśatairbaddhāḥ kāmakrodhaparāyaṇāḥ
īhante kāmabhogārthamanyāyenārthasañcayān

Bound by hundreds of ties of hope, given over to lust and anger, they strive to amass hoards of wealth, by unjust means for sensual enjoyments. 12

Comment:

'Āśāpāśaśatairbaddhāḥ'— The people endowed with a demoniac nature are bound by hundreds of ties of hope i.e., they will amass hoards of wealth, they will win name, fame and honour, and they will be free from diseases and so on. Even having possessed millions of rupees they hope to gain more and more from the Lord, from saints and even from beasts, birds, trees and creepers etc. Their hopes are never fulfilled (Gītā 9/12). Moreover if the hopes are fulfilled they will die and even if they live alive, the things which fulfil their hopes will perish or both will perish.

Those who are bound by the ties of hope and desire can't stay comfortably at one place but those who have become free from these ties can live at one place happily.

'Kāmakrodhaparāyaṇāḥ'— They are given over to lust and anger i.e., they harbour in their hearts various desires for all kinds of sensual enjoyments. When their desires are not gratified they become angry and inflict pain upon others. They think that desires are inevitable in life, without them a man becomes lifeless as a stone. Similarly they think that they can control other beings through anger and if they are not angry, other people will get hold of all their possessions.

'Īhante kāmabhogārthamanyāyenārthasañcayān'—Their aim is to accumulate wealth and enjoy sensual pleasures. In order to fulfil their aim they adopt foul means such as dishonesty, cheating, treachery and injustice etc. They don't hesitate even in usurping the charity funds and properties of children and widows. They believe that foul means are indispensable in the world of today. According to them honesty and justice are merely theoretical assumptions which can't be applicable in real life. If they are honest and just, they will have to suffer and they will not be able to live from hand to mouth—such are the resolves of the people of demoniac nature.

Those people who hanker after heavenly

* Similarly the unwise people who perform actions in order to reap their fruit hold that there is nothing else beyond the heavenly enjoyments (Gītā 2/42). So they want to enjoy those pleasures which are more attractive than the mundane pleasures.

pleasures and prosperity by just means can't have the determinate intellect that they have to realize God (Gītā 2/44). Then how can those people possessing a demoniac nature, who earn money by foul and unjust means, have the determinate intellect to realize God? But even those people through determination can follow the spiritual path and realize God because this human life has been bestowed upon them by Him only to realize Him.

Link:–In the next three verses the Lord gives a description of the people of demoniacal nature.

इदमद्य मया लब्धमिमं प्राप्स्ये मनोरथम्।
इदमस्तीदमपि मे भविष्यति पुनर्धनम्॥ १३॥

idamadya mayā labdhamimaṁ prāpsye manoratham
idamastīdamapi me bhaviṣyati punardhanam

This has been gained by me today, this desire I shall fulfil; this wealth is mine and this wealth also shall be mine (in future). 13

Comment:

'Idamadya mayā labdhamimaṁ prāpsye manoratham'—The demoniac people imagine out of greed that they have gained so much of money and much more they will gain by other means fair or foul. They remain engrossed in such thoughts that the marriage of their educated son will bring them so much money; so much money will be saved by evading taxes and so much money will be received through rent and interest.

'Idamastīdamapi me bhaviṣyati punardhanam'—The more wealth they hoard, the more greedy they become. They always think during their daily routine from early morning till late at night only to amass hoards of wealth and to lead a luxurious life.

But they forget that they are growing old and one day they will die a sad death because they will die thinking of the wealth which they have accumulated and which they will have to leave and so this wealth will cause them grief. They due to greed have to be afraid of their sons and daughters etc. They are also afraid of servants etc., lest the latter should go on strike.

Question:—The strivers possessing a divine nature also think of earning money. Then what is the difference between them and the people who possess a demoniac nature ?

Answer:—Though both of them seem to possess the same disposition, yet there is a vast difference between the two. A striver's aim is God-Realization, so he is not engrossed in hankering after pleasures and prosperity, while a person of demoniac nature gets engrossed because his aim is to enjoy worldly prosperity and sensual pleasures.

असौ मया हतः शत्रुर्हनिष्ये चापरानपि।
ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान्सुखी॥ १४॥

asau mayā hataḥ śatrurhaniṣye cāparānapi
īśvaro'hamahaṁ bhogī siddho'haṁ balavānsukhī

This foe has been slain by me and others also I shall slay. I am the lord, I am the enjoyer, I am successful, mighty and happy. 14

Comment:

The people of demoniac nature out of anger imagine that they have killed a foe and they will kill other people who are their enemy and who act against them. They think that no one is equal to them because they

possess all the luxuries of life and they are very powerful and happy. They hold that they are endowed with a prophetic vision and the future events which they foretell, come ture. They declare that they possess accomplishments such as 'Aṇimā' and 'Garimā' etc., and can burn any one to ashes in a moment. They ridicule those who are engaged in adoration and meditation etc. They regard themselves as the lord of wealth, power and intellect etc., and think that they will ever be successful in their undertakings. They boast of their victory becasuse they are powerful but they never talk of their defeat.

Actually such type of people have an internal burning sensation but outwardly they boast of their power, happiness and achievements.

आढ्योऽभिजनवानस्मि कोऽन्योऽस्ति सदृशो मया ।
यक्ष्ये दास्यामि मोदिष्य इत्यज्ञानविमोहिताः ॥ १५ ॥

āḍhyo'bhijanavānasmi ko'nyo'sti sadṛśo mayā
yakṣye dāsyāmi modiṣya ityajñānavimohitāḥ

"I am the rich and I have so many people. Who else is equal to me ? I shall perform sacrifices. I shall give (charity). I shall rejoice," thus they are deluded by ignorance. 15

Comment:

The people possessing pride and a demoniac nature think that they are very rich and they hold very high ranks and positions. They boastfully declare that they have so many kinsmen, friends and followers. They think that there is no one equal to them in riches, ranks and positions. They declare that they will perform such sacrifices and offer such charities that none can be equal to them. Thus they will enjoy their life. They hold that through great charities and sacrifices they will win name and fame through newspapers. Their names will be inscribed in hospices in their memory.

Such type of people actually imagine, but they don't translate their thoughts into practice. If sometimes they do practically, that is merely a show in order to get name and fame as described in the seventeenth verse of this chapter because they remain entangled in the snare of delusion, having vain imaginations as described in the thirteenth, the fourteenth and the fifteenth verses.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse describes the evil fate after death of such people who possess a demoniac nature.

अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृताः ।
प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ ॥ १६ ॥

anekacittavibhrāntā mohajālasamāvṛtāḥ
prasaktāḥ kāmabhogeṣu patanti narake'śucau

Bewildered by many a fancy, entangled in the snare of delusion, addicted to the gratification of desire, they fall into a foul hell. 16

Comment:

'Anekacittavibhrāntā'—The people of demoniac nature are fickle minded. They have innumerable desires and in order to fulfil them they make many endeavours having many a fancy. They don't stick to one idea and their mind remains tossing.

'Mohajālasamāvṛtāḥ'—They remain

entangled in the snare of delusion as described in the verses thirteenth to fifteenth i.e., they are enmeshed in vain imaginations given over to lust, anger and pride, and never get rid of them. They are ensnared like an ensnared fish. Entangled in the snare of delusion they are bewildered by many a fancy or a thought. They are afraid of the harmful consequences as a result of their various evil thoughts. Their evil thoughts are attended by such fear, "We have black money. If somehow officials come to know of it or clerks etc., may complain against us, then what will happen ? We'll harm others, but it may cause harm to us also"—thus engrossed in such ideas they can't make any firm resolve. They have to suffer a lot of pain when their desires remain unfulfilled.

'Prasaktāḥ kāmabhogeṣu'—Accumulation of wealth and gratification of desires such as enjoyment of sensual pleasures and winning honour, praise, name and fame etc., is the sole aim of their existence.

'Patanti narake'śucau'—While living alive they live in the hell of delusion and after death they are condemned to frightful hells such as Kumbhīpāka and Mahāraurava where they have to suffer the worst tortures*.

Link:–After describing the evil fate of the people of the demoniac nature, the Lord in the next four verses describes the evil feelings born of the evil conduct, and the disastrous consequences of those evil feelings.

आत्मसम्भाविताः स्तब्धा धनमानमदान्विताः ।
यजन्ते नामयज्ञैस्ते दम्भेनाविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ १७ ॥

ātmasambhāvitāḥ stabdhā dhanamānamadānvitāḥ
yajante nāmayajñaiste dambhenāvidhipūrvakam

Self-conceited, stubborn, filled with the pride and intoxication of wealth, they perform sacrifices only in name with ostentation, disregarding scriptural ordinances. 17

Comment:

'Ātmasambhāvitāḥ'—They are puffed up with unbounded pride of their wealth, honour, praise, name and fame etc. They have a very high opinion of their caste, social order, intellect, learning, rank and position etc. Regarding themselves as superior to others they consider themselves worthy of their adoration.

'Stabdhā'—They are too arrogant to behave politely with even saints and the incarnation of God and to bow to them. If under unavoidable circumstances they have to bow to their superiors, they bow to them haughtily.

'Dhanamānamadānvitāḥ'— They remain intoxicated with the wine of wealth and pride. They are proud of their acquaintance with the people who hold high ranks and positions. They rely on riches and their status. They think that they have such resources that they can acquire anything they desire and they can destroy any one as they have an approach to high officials and ministers.

'Yajante nāmayajñaiste dambhena'—They perform ostentatious sacrifices in order to win honour, name and fame. They feed the people of the priest class with meagre food and show that they have fed them up with rich and delicious dishes.

They perform sacrifices and offer charity without paying attention to the scriptural

* In the hells a being attains the body which has to suffer tortures. If that body is broken into pieces or boiled in oil or burnt in fire, it does not die so long as the being does not reap the fruit of his evil actions.

ordinances in order to influence people. They decorate temple and conduct special religious celebrations for pomp and show and self advertisement when there is a visit of some distinguished dignitaries to the temple. This sort of worship in temples is actually not for adoration but for gaining name and fame or for pleasing the officers for their own self interest.

The conductors of cowpens feed the healthy cows properly but underfeed the crippled, disabled and dry cows. Moreover they misuse the funds for their selfish motive. They make a lot of collections but spend a little to run the religious institutions.

Even the strivers observe hypocrisy. They engage themselves in meditation, adoration and telling the beads of a rosary etc., when they see any one coming, otherwise they remain engaged in playing cards and worldly gossips etc. All this hypocrisy is in order to win honour, name, praise and money.

When there is ostentation even in strivers what can be said about the ostentation of the people possessing a demoniac nature?

'Avidhipūrvakam'—They act against the scriptural ordinances. They perform sacrifices without reverence and faith. Similarly they offer charity to the undeserving. They view all things in a perverted way (Gītā 18/32).

अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः ।
मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः ॥ १८ ॥

ahaṅkāraṁ balaṁ darpaṁ kāmaṁ krodhaṁ ca saṁśritāḥ
māmātmaparadeheṣu pradviṣanto'bhyasūyakāḥ

Given over to egoism, force, arrogance, lust and anger, these malicious people despise Me Who is situated in their own bodies and in the bodies of others. 18

Comment:

'Ahaṅkāraṁ balaṁ darpaṁ kāmaṁ krodhaṁ ca saṁśritāḥ'—The people possessing a demoniac nature are given over to egoism, force, arrogance, lust and anger. They depend on these demoniac propensities in the same way as devotees depend on God. They believe that a person without possessing these propensities is humiliated and crushed. So they cultivate them and perpetuate them so that they may win honour, praise, name and fame and may keep other people under control.

'Māmātmaparadeheṣu pradviṣantaḥ'– The Lord says that those people hate Him Who dwells in their own bodies as well as in the bodies of others. The ordinances of the scriptures and jurisprudence (Smṛties) are His own ordinances. Those who disobey Him and are malicious against Him, are thrown into hells.

They despise the Lord in two ways. First they don't listen to the voice of their conscience which tells them what is right and what is wrong. Secondly they despise, insult and distress other people who are none other than the manifestations of the Lord.

'Abhyasūyakāḥ'—These malicious people find fault with Him as well as with others. They say that the Lord is partial because He protects the devotees and destroys the wicked. They are jealous of the saints and ascetics who are virtuous and they believe that all the saints, ascetics, devotees and strivers also possess vile propensities such as attachment, aversion, lust, anger, selfishness and ostentation etc. They oppose adoration, meditation, fasts and pilgrimages etc., declaring them as futile pursuits which bear no sweet fruits, because they themselves have received nothing out of them. They have merely wasted their time. Thus those demoniac people follow the path contrary to the right one.

तानहं द्विषतः क्रूरान्संसारेषु नराधमान्।
क्षिपाम्यजस्त्रमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥ १९ ॥

tānahaṁ dviṣataḥ krūrānsaṁsāreṣu narādhamān
kṣipāmyajasramaśubhānāsurīṣveva yoniṣu

Those cruel haters, worst among men in the world, I hurl constantly these evil-doers into the wombs of demons only. 19

Comment:

'Tānahaṁ dviṣataḥ krūrān-saṁsāreṣu narādhamān'—The demoniac nature, described in the fifteenth verse of the seventh chapter and the twelfth verse of the ninth chapter, has been described in detail from the seventh verse to the eighteenth verse of this chapter. Now concluding this topic in the nineteenth and the twentieth verses of the chapter the Lord declares that such people who bear malice to other people and are bent upon doing ill to them, possessing a demoniac nature are very cruel. They take delight in committing violence. They are the worst of men because the beings dwelling in the hells are becoming pure after receiving the fruits of their evil deeds while they by committing cruel deeds are paving the way to hells. Therefore in the Rāmacaritamānasa it is mentioned that it is better to reside in hells than to have the company of wicked or vile persons because their company creates such seeds which are not destroyed even after getting their fruits in hells and eighty-four lac forms of lives.

The Lord has declared that desire is the root of sins (3/37). When a man has a desire to earn more money he adopts foul means such as falsehood, fraud and knavery and even commits sins such as smuggling and robbery and does not even hesitate in committing murder. Thus he becomes more and more cruel. So he has to bear the pain in the wombs of demons and also in foul hells.

'Kṣipāmyajasramaśubhānāsurīṣveva yoniṣu'—To call these people by their name, to see them and to remember them is very unholy. Such people are called 'Aśubhān' (evil-doers). The Lord hurls such type of cruel persons according to their nature into the wombs of demons i.e., He hurls them into the wombs of the cruel beings such as dogs, tigers, lions, snakes and scorpions etc., not only once but constantly so that they may be purified of their sins.

Actually every being is a fragment of God and so he is His. The Lord is the disinterested friend of all beings. So by regarding them as His own He hurls them into the wombs of the cruel beings in order to purify them of all their sins. Thus being pure they may attain eternal bliss or salvation. He is different from other friends and kinsmen who provide comforts and luxuries to him and enable him to get entangled in the worldly pleasures.

As a good teacher punishes a pupil so that he may become learned, the most merciful Lord throws even atheists into the wombs of demons so that they may be purified of their sins and may attain salvation because He regards them as His own.

आसुरीं योनिमापन्ना मूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि।
मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधमां गतिम् ॥ २० ॥

āsurīṁ yonimāpannā mūḍhā janmani janmani
māmaprāpyaiva kaunteya tato yāntyadhamāṁ gatim

Fallen into the wombs of demons, these deluded beings, from birth to birth, do not attain to Me, O Son of Kuntī (Arjuna) but sink down to still lower state. 20

Comment:

'Āsurīm yonimāpannā mūḍhā janmani janmani māmaprāpyaiva kaunteya'— In the preceding verse the Lord declared that He hurls the persons possessing the demoniacal nature into the lower wombs of beasts and birds. Here also He declares that in this human life they have got the rare opportunity of God-Realization, yet instead of realizing Him they go to the wombs of demons and again and again go on taking birth in demoniacal wombs.

By the term 'Māmaprāpyaiva' The Lord means to say that He regrets for his action of bestowing this human body to a being. He offered this human body in order to enable him to attain salvation. But he proved treacherous because he, instead of attaining salvation, sank down to a still lower plane.

A being during this human life, even though of the most vile conduct, swiftly may become a soul of righteousness and attain eternal peace (Gītā 9/30-31) and even at the time of death may attain the Lord (Gītā 8/5). The reason is that the Lord is the same to all beings (Gītā 9/29) and so He has provided an opportunity to all beings to attain Him. The birds and beasts because of their undeveloped discrimination can't attain Him but there is no restriction from the Lord even for them. So the Lord is very sad when He sees that human beings, instead of availing of the golden opportunity to attain salvation, sink to lower planes.

'Tato yāntyadhamāṁ gatim'—Their sins don't totally perish even during demoniac births. So they have to go to still lower planes viz., hells.

Here a doubt arises why the Lord has said that these deluded beings don't attain to Him but sink down to a still lower plane, when there is no opportunity for them to realize Him in the demoniac birth. The clarification is that the Lord has said so because he was given an opportunity to realize Him in the human life before the demoniac birth but he did not avail of that opportunity. Hence he gets the demoniac birth. It means that human beings, instead of attaining to Him, first fall into the wombs of demons and then sink down to still lower planes of foul hells. Such as 'Kumbhīpāka' etc.

An Important Fact

The Lord bestows this human body upon a being so that a man may attain salvation. But he being over powered by desires, selfishness and pride commits sins such as robbery, knavery, treachery and violence which result in (1) Outward fruit (2) Inward influence. A person has to suffer according to the evil actions of the past. But those, who inflict pain on him, commit new sins which will bear painful fruits. Moreover the sins leave their impression in the ego. That impression is very disastrous because that impression in the form of evil feelings instigates him to commit sins again and again. Therefore unless and until a man attains salvation viz., unless he dispells these evil feelings from his ego, these evil feelings will induce him to resort to evil actions here and hereafter and will lead him to demoniac wombs and foul hells where he will have to suffer tortures.

Among the demoniac beings such as beasts, birds, ghosts, insects and moths etc., also it is seen that some of them are more cruel while others are milder according to the nature of the previous birth. Even when the Lord by His grace bestows upon them the human body, they don't renounce desire (lust) and anger which are the impressions of the previous birth. The marks of those who return from hells are excessive anger, harsh or bitter speech, poverty, enmity towards kinsmen, company of the mean and service to the mean. Similarly those

who perform virtuous actions in order to attain heaven, go to heaven. There they enjoy the vast heaven as the fruit of their virtuous actions but their nature does not undergo any change. The four marks of those returning from heaven are: inclination towards offering charity, sweet speech, adoration to the gods and efforts to satisfy the members of the priest class. A being can change his nature only during this human life.

Link:–The Lord in the preceding verse declared that people of demoniac nature instead of attaining to Him fall into the wombs of demons and then sink down to a still lower plane. The Lord in the next verse gives the reason why first they fall into the demoniac wombs and then sink down to a still lower plane.

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥ २१ ॥

trividhaṁ narakasyedaṁ dvāraṁ nāśanamātmanaḥ
kāmaḥ krodhastathā lobhastasmādetattrayaṁ tyajet

Triple is the gate of this hell, leading to the ruin of the soul—lust (desire), anger and greed. Therefore one should abandon these three. 21

Comment:

'Kāmaḥ krodhastathā lobhaḥ-trividhaṁ narakasyedaṁ dvāram'— The Lord in the fifth verse declared that the divine nature is conducive to liberation and the demoniacal to bondage. Then what is the root of the demoniac nature? Desire for worldly pleasures, prosperity, honour, praise and comforts etc., is the root of demoniac nature which leads human beings to hells. Desire, anger, greed, delusion, intoxication of wealth (arrogance) and jealousy have been regarded as the six enemies. Out of these six enemies, in the Gītā, at some place there is mention of three–desire, anger and greed; at some place there is mention of two–attachment and aversion; while at some other place only desire has been declared as the enemy of strivers. Out of them desire is the root which binds a man (Gītā 5/12).

In the thirty-sixth verse of the third chapter Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, "By what is a man impelled to commit sin, as if by force, even against his will?" The Lord replied that it is desire which is later transformed into wrath, which is the all-devouring, sinful enemy in this case. When a desire is not fulfilled it gives birth to wrath. But here in this verse desire (lust), anger and greed have been mentioned as the three ememies. It means that an inclination towards pleasures is desire (lust) and inclination towards accumulation is greed. Where only the term 'Kāma' (desire) is given, it also includes the desire for pleasure and accumulation of riches. But when both the terms 'Kāma' (desire) and 'Lobha' (greed) are given independently, the term 'Kāma' stands for desire for pleasure while 'Lobha' stands for desire for accumulation. When there is any obstruction in the fulfilment of these inclinations, anger springs. When there is an excess of desire, anger and greed, delusion is born.

From desire springs anger and from anger arises delusion (Gītā 2/62-63). If a desire is fulfilled, it gives birth to greed and from greed springs delusion. In fact it is desire which is transformed into anger and greed. Delusion leads to the mode of ignorance and then demoniac nature prevails.

'Nāśanamātmanaḥ'—Desire, anger and greed degrade a man. Those who hanker after worldly pleasures and prosperity regard these three evil propensities as conducive to their welfare. But actually the man who falls a prey to them meets degradation or ruination.

'Tasmādetattrayaṁ tyajet'—When a person comes to know that desire, anger and greed are the three gates to hell, he should renounce them. How to renounce them? The Lord in the thirty-fourth verse of the third chapter has declared that attachment (desire) and aversion (anger) for the objects of the senses abide in the senses but a striver should not come under their sway i.e., he should not perform any action against the ordinance of the scriptures being overpowered by desire, anger and greed. If a man comes under their sway, he is ruined.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord explains the glory of the man who is liberated from these three gates of hell.

एतैर्विमुक्तः कौन्तेय तमोद्वारैस्त्रिभिर्नरः ।
आचरत्यात्मनः श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ २२ ॥

etairvimuktaḥ kaunteya tamodvāraistribhimaraḥ
ācaratyātmanaḥ śreyastato yāti parāṁ gatim

The man freed from three gates to darkness practises what is good for him and then attains the Supreme Goal, O Son of Kuntī (Arjuna). 22

Comment:

'Etairvimuktaḥ kaunteya tamodvāraistribhimaraḥ ācaratyātmanaḥ śreyastato yāti parāṁ gatim'—Desire, anger and greed which were called the gates of hell in the preceding verse have been called the gates to darkness in this verse. Darkness is born of ignorance (Gītā 14/8). A man swayed by the gates of hell never thinks "These riches, wife, family and friends were neither with me nor will remain in future and at present also they are separating from me. If I have the sense of mine with them, I may be damned." It means that the desire for prosperity, pleasures and other worldly things, which are transitory and perishable, leads a man to darkness. He does not think of the consequences of his attachment to them. But he who having been free from desire etc., practises what is good for him attains the Supreme Goal. So a striver should be cautious against desire, anger and greed.

A striver practises spiritual discipline in order to purify himself of evil feelings and evil conduct but he does not pay attention to the evil propensities such as desire (lust) and greed etc., which he possesses. So a striver should be aware of them. Moreover he should think of the Lord from early morning till late at night and from the day he has realized His importance to the time of death.

The term 'Etairvimuktaḥ' (liberated from these) does not mean that a striver after being free from evil conduct should follow the spiritual discipline. But it means that a striver having the aim of God-Realization should try to be free from desire, anger, greed and other evil propensities. It is because of these evil propensities that a striver commits sins and does not progress spiritually. In fact a man (soul) being a fragment of God is sentient pure and naturally a heap of bliss but his inclination towards the world has resulted in impurity in him, so if he develops a disinclination towards the world, he will naturally make spiritual progress.

The expression 'Śreyaḥ ācarati' (Practises what is good) means that a striver should perform only prescribed actions, and not prohibited actions. He should not translate the evil propensities (such as desire or lust and anger) into practice. He should try his best to be free from them. If he finds that his efforts are going in vain, he should invoke the Lord and pray to Him to liberate him from these evils. Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsa prays

to God,"O Lord, my heart is Your residence but several thieves (evils) have settled there. I request them to leave it. But they want to reside there forcibly" (Vinaya Patrikā 125/2-3). It means that he is unable to be free from these evils. So he seeks refuge in Him so that He may protect him from them.

Link:–Those, who practise what is good for them, attain the Supreme Goal. But what happens to those who act according to their own sweet will, and cast aside the ordinance of the scriptures. The Lord answers in the next verse.

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥ २३ ॥

yaḥ śāstravidhimutsṛjya vartate kāmakārataḥ
*na sa siddhimavāpnoti na sukhaṁ na parāṁ gatim**

He who, having cast aside the ordinances of the scriptures, acts in an arbitrary way, according to his sweet will, attains neither perfection, nor happiness nor the Supreme Goal. 23

Comment:

'Yaḥ śāstravidhimutsṛjya vartate'— Those people perform actions such as sacrifice, offer charity and do good to others in an arbitrary way according to their sweet will† disobeying the ordinances of the scriptures. The reason is that they attach importance only to the outward activities instead of the inward feelings.

Though they have evil feelings, yet they are proud of their virtuous actions. It is because of their pride that their virtues are transformed into evils, their glory into blame and their renunciation into attachment and pleasure which lead them to their downfall and ruin. It is because of their internal evil feelings that they act in an arbitrary way according to their own sweet will.

As a patient intends to discard unwholesome diet and intends to take wholesome diet. But out of attachment takes unwholesome diet which worsens his disease, similarly the people from their own viewpoint make an attempt to perform good actions. But evils—desire, anger and greed take them under their sway and then they act in an arbitrary way disregarding the ordinance of the scriptures and are thus damned.

'Na sa siddhimavāpnoti'— Those possessing the demoniac nature, perform virtuous actions such as religious sacrifice etc., casting aside the ordinances of the scriptures, they may attain perfection in the form of wealth, and honour etc., but they don't attain perfection in the form of the purity of heart.

'Na sukham'— They don't attain the Sāttvika happiness because in their hearts the burning sensation of desire and anger etc., persists but they derive pleasure, born of contacts with objects, which are only sources of sorrow (Gītā 5/22).

'Na parāṁ gatim'— They don't attain the Supreme Goal because they don't believe in it. Moreover their actions performed out of desire, anger and greed are not conducive to the attainment of the Supreme Goal.

Their acts are good. So they can attain perfection, happiness and the Supreme

* The theme of the twenty-eighth verse of the seventeenth chapter is almost the same.

† (A) Here in the verse the expression 'Kāmakārataḥ' denotes one's own unrestrained self-will while in the expression 'Kāmakāreṇa' used in the twelfth verse of the fifth chapter there is desire for pleasures. The former looks at the actions while the latter looks at the fruit of the action. But 'Kāma' (Desire) is the root in both of them.
(B) Here a point needs attention that in this chapter from the seventh verse to the twenty-third verse the term 'Kāma' (Desire) has been used nine times in the context of the demoniac nature (16/8, 16/10, 11, 12, 12, 16, 18, 21, 23) (in 12 verse two times each). It means that desire is the root of the demoniac nature.

Goal. But they don't attain them because they possess evil propensities such as desire (lust), anger, greed and pride which are the stumbling blocks in their attainment. It is because of these evil propensities that their actions generally convert into evils and vices. Therefore they don't get all these things. Had their activities been evil by nature, there would have not been any question of their attaining perfection, happiness and the Supreme Goal.

Link:–Those, who cast aside the ordinances of the scriptures, attain neither perfection nor happiness nor the Supreme Goal. So what should a man do? The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥ २४ ॥

tasmācchāstraṁ pramāṇaṁ te kāryākāryavyavasthitau
jñātvā śāstravidhānoktaṁ karma kartumihārhasi

Therefore, let the scripture be the authority in determining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. Having known what is said in the ordinance of the scripture, thou shouldst act here in this world. 24

Comment:

'Tasmācchāstraṁ pramāṇaṁ te kāryākāryavyavasthitau'—Those who are attached to their life-breath don't know what should be done and what should be refrained from. So they are specially inclined towards the demoniac nature. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to act according to the ordinance of the scripture.

The conduct and words of the saints and great souls are also based on the scripture. So obedience to them is also obedience to the ordinances of the scripture because they have become saints and great souls by following the ordinances of the scripture. In fact the ordinances of the scripture are established by following the feelings, precepts and principles and acts of the God-Realized souls.

The expression 'Śāstraṁ pramāṇam' means that a person who wants to attain eternal bliss should readily renounce what ever is prohibited by the scripture and accept what is ordained by the scripture.

'Jñātvā śāstravidhānoktaṁ karma kartumihārhasi'*—The people of demoniac nature don't know what to do and what to refrain from (Gītā 16/7). So they don't attain perfection. Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that he should act according to the ordinance of the scripture because he possesses the divine nature.

First Arjuna thought that sin alone would accrue to him by killing his kinsmen in the battle. So the Lord declared, "Happy are the Kṣatriyas (members of the warrior class) who are called upon to fight in such a battle that comes of itself as an open door to heaven" (Gītā 2/32). Here the Lord says that he should discharge his duty according to the ordinance of the scripture because it can't lead him to bondage. The act which is performed by having selfishness and pride leads to bondage while the action which is performed against the ordinance of scriptures leads to ruin.

One's own duty of fighting in the battle seems full of cruelty and violence, but actually the fighter incurs no sin (Gītā 18/47). It means that a person who discharges his duty in accordance with the ordinance of the scripture incurs no sin. He incurs sin only when he performs actions with selfishness and pride in order to harm others.

* The term 'Iha' here means that a man should avail of the human life which has been bestowed upon him in order to realize God by performing noble actions.

Human life is successful only when a person without being attached to the body and life-breath performs actions according to the ordinance of the scriptures for God-Realization.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुन-संवादे दैवासुरसम्पद्विभागयोगो नाम षोडशोऽध्यायः ॥ १६ ॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyām yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde daivāsurasampadvibhāgayogo nāma ṣoḍaśo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ, Tat, Sat, the names of the Lord, in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavadgītā, the knowledge of Brahma, the Supreme, the Science of Yoga and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, this is the sixteenth discourse designated:

"The Yoga of Division between the Divine and the Demoniacal."

This chapter is designated 'Daivāsura-sampadvibhāgayoga' (The Yoga of Division between the Divine and the Demoniacal) because in this chapter there is the description of the two contrary natures – the divine and the demoniac. The former nature leads to salvation while the latter leads to bondage, lower wombs and hells. A striver who knows the two in the right perspective renounces the demoniac nature. As soon as he renounces the demoniac nature, the divine nature is automatically revealed in him, and with the revelation of the divine nature he realizes that he has connection only with God.

Words, letters and Uvāca (said) in the Sixteenth Chapter

(1) In this chapter in **'Atha ṣoḍaśo'dhyāyaḥ'** there are three words, in **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** there are two words, in verses there are two hundred and eighty-seven words and there are thirteen concluding words. Thus the total number of words is three hundred and five only.

(2) In this chapter in **'Atha ṣoḍaśo'dhyāyaḥ'** there are seven letters, in **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'** there are seven letters, in verses there are seven hundred and sixty-eight letters and there are fifty-two concluding letters. Thus the total number of letters is eight hundred and thirty-four only.

(3) In this chapter the term **'Uvāca'** (said) has been used once and that is **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'.**

Metres Used in the Sixteenth Chapter

Out of the twenty-four verses of this chapter in the first quarter of the sixth verse in the third quarter of the tenth verse and in the first quarter of the twenty-second verse 'ma-gaṇa' being used there is **'ma-vipulā'** metre; in the third quarters of the eleventh, thirteenth and nineteenth verses 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'na-vipulā'** metre. The remaining eighteen verses are possessed of the characteristics of right **'pathyāvaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

Śrī Hariḥ

SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

Introduction

*The Lord in the twenty-third verse of the sixteenth chapter declared that he, who, having cast aside the ordinances of the scriptures, acts in an arbitrary way according to his sweet will, attains neither perfection nor happiness nor the Supreme Goal. Listening to the Lord's statement Arjuna thinks that only a few people know those ordinances. Majority of people don't know these ordinances but they worship the gods etc., according to their caste, social order (Āśrama) and family tradition and innate faith etc. Due to their disregard for the ordinances of the scriptures they should be regarded as demoniac but due to their faith, they should be considered men of divine traits. So Arjuna wants to know where such people stand. Therefore he puts the question to Lord Kṛṣṇa in the first verse.**

अर्जुन उवाच

ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः ॥ १ ॥†

arjuna uvāca

ye śāstravidhimutsṛjya yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
teṣāṁ niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa sattvamāho rajastamaḥ

Arjuna said:

Those who, neglecting the ordinances of the scriptures, perform sacrifice with faith – what is their position, O Kṛṣṇa ! Is it Sattva (of goodness), Rajas (of passion) or Tamas (of ignorance)? 1

Comment:

'Ye śāstravidhimutsṛjya,..... sattvamāho rajastamaḥ'—The gospel of the Gītā in the form of the dialogue between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna is for the welfare of all beings. Both of them had the people of the Kali age in view because the Dvāpara age was coming to an end. So Arjuna thinking of the people of the Kali age asks Lord Kṛṣṇa the position of those who have good feelings and are also endowed with faith but they have not acquired accurate and elaborate knowledge of the scriptures.‡ So they disregard the ordinances of the scriptures through ignorance. People in general will have a little knowledge of the scriptures. Moreover it will be difficult for them to get company of saints and great souls as they will be rare in Kali age. In spite of their being rare if anyone wants to get their company, he can have it. But the trouble is that in Kali age several hypocrites disguise themselves as saints. Thus it becomes difficult to recognize them. So it becomes very difficult to have company of real saints and to derive benefit from them. Therefore such people neither know the ordinance of the scriptures nor have the

* To treat this (seventeenth) chapter as an explanation of the twenty-seventh verse of the ninth chapter (Whatever you do and whatever you offer, do that as an offering to Me) is not reasonable because the twenty-seventh verse of the ninth chapter is included in the topic 'offerings to God' which begins from the twenty-sixth verse and is concluded in the twenty-eight verse with the result of these offerings. But here is the topic of faith.

† Here the topic is based on the twenty-third verse of the sixteenth chapter because in both the verses there is the mention of 'having cast aside the ordinances of the scriptures'. Instead of 'under the impulse of desire' here the expression 'endowed with faith' has been used; similarly instead of 'acts' the expression 'performs sacrifice' and instead of 'attains neither perfection, nor happiness nor the Supreme Goal' the sentence 'What is their position – Sattva, Rajas or Tamas?' have been used.

‡ The ordinances of the scriptures are neglected by (1) ignorance (2) indifference (3) opposition.

company of saints and great souls. But they worship gods and perform austerities with innate faith. So Arjuna asks their position. Is it of goodness, or of passion or of ignorance?

'Sattvamāho 'rajastamaḥ'— The mode of Sattva (Goodness) is included in the divine nature while the modes of Raja (Passion) and Tama (Ignorance) are included in the demoniac nature. The mode of passion resembles the mode of ignorance in certain respects.* In the sixty-second and sixty-third verses of the second chapter in the Gītā it is mentioned that anger springs from desire which is the mode of passion while from anger arises delusion, the mode of ignorance. Similarly in the twenty-seventh verse of the eighteenth chapter the doer who is swayed by sorrow and who is given to violence is said to be passionate while in the twenty-fifth verse of the same chapter violence has been called a mark of the mode of ignorance, and in the thirty-fifth verse sorrow, a mark of the firmness of the mode of ignorance. Thus several marks of the mode of ignorance and the mode of passion are similar.

The Sāttvika feelings, thoughts and conduct are included in the divine nature while the Rājasika and Tāmasika ones are included in the demoniac nature. A man's position is decided in accordance with his nature. Here by the term 'position' Arjuna wants to know what is the destination of such a man as he also asked in the thirty-seventh verse of the sixth chapter.

Here Arjuna addresses the Lord as Kṛṣṇa(One who attracts). He wants to ask in which directions He will attract such a man i.e., what is the destination of such a man, what is his end.

Now a question arises whether the Lord attracts persons or whether they are attracted according to the fruit of their actions. The answer is that a man receives the fruit of his actions but the controller of those fruits is the Lord. He awards the fruits according to their action. But being the disinterested friend of all He hurls them into hells in order to purify them of their sins and then he attracts all of them towards Him. So the Lord says for the people of the demoniac nature that those deluded beings instead of attaining Him go down to the lower plane (16/20). It means that the Lord is sad when he sees that human beings instead of attaining Him, go down to the lower state.

Link:–A man, who does not know the ordinance of the scripture, is endowed with faith of one type or the other. The three kinds of that faith are described in the next verse.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा ।
सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु ॥ २ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca
trividhā bhavati śraddhā dehināṁ sā svabhāvajā
sāttvikī rājasī caiva tāmasī ceti tāṁ śṛṇu

The Blessed Lord said:

The faith of human beings born of their own nature is of three kinds–Sāttvika, (good), Rājasika (passionate) and Tāmasika (ignorant). Now hear about it. 2

* Sattvaguṇa (The mode of goodness) is ten times superior to the Rajoguṇa (The mode of passion) while the mode of passion is ten times superior to the Tamoguna (The mode of ignorance). It means that the mode of goodness is a hundred times superior to the mode of ignorance.

Comment:

[Arjuna put the question to know where they stand while the Lord answers his question according to their faith because they stand as is their faith.]

'Trividhā bhavati śraddhā dehināṁ sā svabhāvajā'— The faith is of three kinds. Now the question arises whether that faith is born of the company or learning of the scriptures or of the innate nature. The answer is that it is born of their nature. By having this faith people worship the gods etc.

'Sāttvikī rājasī caiva tāmasī ceti tāṁ śṛṇu' —The faith born of nature is of three kinds – Sāttvika (Good), Rājasa (Passionate) and Tāmasa (Ignorant or dull). Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to hear these three from Him.

In the preceding verse in the expression 'Sattvamāho rajastamaḥ' the conjunction 'Āho' (Or) has been used which denotes that according to Arjuna 'Sattvam' (Good) stands for the divine nature while 'Rajas-tamaḥ' (Passionate-Ignorant) stand for the demoniac nature. It means that according to him there are only two divisions. As far as bondage is concerned the Lord also includes both the Rajas and the Tamas in demoniac nature when He declares that the demoniac nature is conducive to bondage (Gītā 16/5). But there is a difference between the two—the Rajas and the Tamas. The Rājasa (Passionate) people perform actions according to ordinance of the scripture in order to get their fruit. So having enjoyed in heaven the heavenly pleasures, they enter (return to) the world of mortals, when their merit is exhausted (Gītā 9/21). But the Tāmasa (Ignorant) people don't perform actions according to the ordinance of the scripture. So they sink downwards (Gītā 14/18). Thus the Lord divides the faith of the people possessing a demoniac nature into two parts the Rajas and the Tamas and asks Arjuna to hear from him the three kinds of faith—Sāttvika, Rājasa and Tāmasa separately.

Link:–The Lord in the preceding verse explains three kinds of faith. In the next verse He explains why it is of three kinds.

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत।
श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः॥ ३॥

sattvānurūpā sarvasya śraddhā bhavati bhārata
śrddhāmayo'yaṁ puruṣo yo yacchraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ

The faith of each, O Bhārata (Arjuna), is in accordance with his nature. Man is of the nature of his faith; as a man's faith is, so is he. 3

Comment:

'Sattvānurūpā sarvasya śraddhā bhavati bhārata' —Here the expression 'Sattvānurūpā' stands for 'Svabhāvajā' which was used in the preceding verse. The term 'Sattva' stands for nature. So the faith of a man is in accordance with his nature. As a man's nature is Sāttvika, Rājasa or Tāmasa, so is his faith.

The term 'Sarvasya' denotes 'Dehināṁ' (The embodied) used in the preceding verse. It means that the faith of each person, whether he knows the ordinances of the scriptures or not, believes in them or not, acts according to them or not and he may belong to any caste and creed, country, social order, of any tradition and faith is of three kinds.

'Śrddhāmayo'yaṁ puruṣaḥ'— A man's character is judged by his faith. As a man's faith is, so is his character.

'Yo yacchraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ' —As a man's faith is so is his 'Niṣṭhā' (State of being, conviction) and according to his conviction is his destination. His feelings and actions are according to his faith. So

long as he maintains affinity with the world, he is the same as is his nature.

A Vital Fact

A man is inclined towards the world by regarding it as true while he is inclined towards God by having faith in Him. Without faith a man can't progress in the spiritual sphere whether he follows the discipline of action or of knowledge or of devotion.

Faith occupies an important place in a man's life. As a man's faith is, so is he (17/3). He may not be so today but in the course of time he will become so.

Today it is difficult for a striver to recognize his natural faith because there are innumerable sects and religions. Having read and heard different opinions and principles he finds himself in a fix. He can't decide what his aim is and what he should do. In such circumstances he should give a serious thought to his internal feelings which are untainted by any external influences either of the company or the preceptor or the scriptures. Thus he comes to know of his natural inclination or faith.

Every being has an inclination to be free from all sorrows and to attain eternal bliss. This inclination is aroused in human beings because of their past influences, present education, environment and heredity. They make their resolution according to their inclination or nature. This resolution decides their faith. The Sāttvika faith leads to spirituality while the Tāmasa and Rājasa ones lead to the world. So the Sāttvika faith is spiritual while the Tāmasa and the Rājasa faiths are mundane i.e., the-Sāttvika faith is the divine nature while the Tāmasa and the Rājasa faiths constitute the demoniac nature. The seventeenth chapter has been started in order to enable the people to renounce the demoniac nature and to reveal the divine nature. The reason is that those who want to attain salvation should renounce the demoniac nature and should possess the divine one.

The faith of the people who want to attain salvation is Sāttvika, of those who want mundane pleasures, prosperity and also heaven etc., is Rājasa and of those who believe in 'Eat, drink and be merry' as well as in indolence, heedlessness and excessive sleep etc., is Tāmasa. Faith consists in the acceptance of the existence of God and in His realization. Where there is faith, there love reveals itself naturally because the soul is a fragment of God. So as soon as he develops faith, he is attracted towards Him. When having a disinclination for the Lord, he remains absorbed in worldly pleasures and prosperity believing in the mundane. This sort of faith or belief is not real, it is misuse of faith. This mundane faith leads to a downfall. The faith that he belongs to a particular caste (Varṇa) and a particular social order (Āśrama) is higher sort of faith than the mundane faith. But the best and the real faith is the faith in God, saints, liberated souls and the scriptures. This faith leads to salvation*.

Those who have neither knowledge of the scriptures nor company of the great souls can also have faith in spirituality or God because of the impressions of the past. Such type of people naturally believe in God and are engaged in virtuous actions such as religious sacrifice, charity, austerity, pilgrimage, fast, good company and study of the scriptures etc. Even if they don't perform such virtuous actions, their faith can be recognized by the Sāttvika food they eat.

All beings such as human beings, birds, beasts, plants and creepers etc., whether moving or unmoving regard someone superior to them and depend upon him or it. When adversity visits them, all of them take shelter in someone who is superior to them. He who has deemed anyone superior to him and taken shelter in him, he may believe in God or not, he has in fact accepted God in principle. He who goes on viewing superiority of one over the other in respect of age, learning, quality, wisdom,

* In the mundane faith there is predominance of pleasures, in the religious faith there is predominance of feeling and in the spiritual faith there is predominance of the real.

ability, power and status etc., he will have to accept finally the most superior One to whom there is no other superior. All superiority ends in Him and He is God. **'Pūrveṣāmapi guruḥ kālenānavacchedāt'** (Yogadarśana 1/26).

He is the preceptor of the most ancient ancestors because He is above the time limit.

Everybody concedes someone or the other superior to him from his view-point. This faith in superiority is according to the feelings of his inner sense. These feelings constitute his faith. These feelings remain different in different persons. So their faith is also distinct.

A man's faith is Sāttvika, Rājasa or Tāmasa according to his nature. All beings are endowed with the three modes of nature—Sāttvika, Rājasika, Tāmasika (Gītā 18/40). One of them may predominate the other two (Gītā 14/10) in every being. As nature always undergoes changes, so its modes also undergo changes. So a striver, whose aim is God-Realization, without assuming any affinity with the modes of nature, should remain unperturbed by them.

The soul is a fragment of God. So when a man finds the predominance of the mode either of passion or of ignorance, he should not regard himself as mean or low. Being a fragment of God he (soul) is pure. It is his company or environment by which one mode of nature predominates by suppressing the other two. As the nature of a man is, so is his faith – Sāttvika, Rājasa or Tāmasa. So a striver should keep good (Sāttvika) company, should live in good environment and should study the scriptures. By doing so his nature and faith will be Sāttvika (Good) and they will lead him to salvation. On the other hand by bad company, bad environment and bad literature his faith will be Rājasika or Tāmasika which will degrade him.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse explains the means of ascertaining the conviction (state of being) of a person by his worship.

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान्यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः ।
प्रेतान्भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥ ४ ॥

yajante sāttvikā devānyakṣarakṣāṁsi rājasāḥ
pretānbhūtagaṇāṁścānye yajante tāmasā janāḥ

Good men worship the gods; the passionate worship the gnomes and the demons; the ignorant worship the spirits and ghosts. 4

Comment:

'Yajante sāttvikā devān'— The Sāttvika (Good) people possessing the divine nature worship the gods. Here the term 'Devān' denotes the five chief deities – Viṣṇu (the preserver), (Rāma or Kṛṣṇa etc.), Śiva (the destroyer), Gaṇeśa, Durgā (Power) and the Sun because the term 'Deva' stands for God (Divinity) and His nature viz., divine nature which is conducive to liberation (16/5). Thus the strivers possessing the Sāttvika (Good) faith worship any one of five chief deities according to their natural faith. The worship of twelve Ādityas, eight Vasus, eleven Rūdras and two Aśvinī Kumāras without any selfish motive is also regarded as Sāttvika worship.

'Yakṣarakṣāṁsi rājasāḥ'— The passionate worship the gnomes and the demons. They are included among the gods. The gnomes hanker after the accumulation of wealth and then guard it while the demons are bent upon the destruction of others. The passionate worship them in order to satisfy their own desires and to destroy others.

'Pretānbhūtagaṇāṁścānye yajante tāmasā janāḥ'—The ignorant people worship spirits and ghosts. Those who are dead are called 'Preta' while those who are in the forms of the life of ghosts are 'Bhūta'.

Here the manes should not be included in the term 'Preta' (Spirit) because those, who worship the manes as a part of their duty without any desire for the fruit of their actions (worship), are Sāttvika (Good). The Lord in the Gītā has not prohibited the worship of manes (Gītā 9/25). Those who worship the manes having a desire for fruits such as their own safety and reward etc., go to the manes. Such worshippers regard their manes as their favourite deities who hold the highest positions. So they go to the abode of the manes, they can't go to higher regions which are beyond the abode of the manes. But those who worship the manes as a part of their duty, without having any desire for fruits, are Sāttvika (Good or Pure), they are not Rājasa (Passionate).

Those, who feed dogs and crows selflessly, obeying the ordinance of the scripture, do not attain them. Similar is the case with those who worship the manes without any desire for fruits. Their worship leads them to salvation. Similarly obsequies such as Nārāyaṇabali and Gayā-Śrāddha (Offering of water, food etc., to the Brāhmaṇas in honour of the manes) which are sanctioned by the scriptures are indispensable. They must be performed so that the soul of the dead persons may attain higher states such as salvation etc. Such actions are Sāttvika.

Those, who while performing the sacrifice, worship Lord Gaṇeśa and Navagraha (Nine planets) etc., according to the ordinance of the scripture without any desire for the fruit, actually worship the scripture in the same way as the chaste wife of even a demon attains salvation, not because she has served her demon-husband but because she has obeyed the Lord, the saints and the scriptures. In the twenty-fifth verse of the ninth chapter the worship of gods has been mentioned to tell the fate of worshippers while in this verse the worship of gods has been mentioned to judge the faith of the worshipper. So the term 'Yajante' has been used here. Thus the Lord has explained that a man worships a deity according to his conviction or faith.

Link:–The Lord in the preceding verses described those people, who casting aside the ordinances of the scriptures, offer worship with faith. They neglect the ordinances because they don't know them. Now He in the next two verses describes those who intentionally neglect the ordinances of the scriptures and are also lacking in faith.

अशास्त्रविहितं घोरं तप्यन्ते ये तपो जनाः ।
दम्भाहंकारसंयुक्ताः कामरागबलान्विताः ॥ ५ ॥
कर्शयन्तः शरीरस्थं भूतग्राममचेतसः ।
मां चैवान्तःशरीरस्थं तान्विद्ध्यासुरनिश्चयान् ॥ ६ ॥

aśāstravihitaṁ ghoraṁ tapyante ye tapo janāḥ
dambhāhaṅkārasaṁyuktāḥ kāmarāgabalānvitāḥ
karśayantaḥ śarīrastham bhūtagrāmamacetasaḥ
māṁ caivāntaḥśarīrastham tānviddhyāsuraniścayān

Those men who perform violent austerities not enjoined by the scripture, given to hypocrisy and egoism, impelled by the force of desire (lust) and attachment, who torment the group of elements in their body, and Me, Who dwell in the body, know these senseless (ignorant) people to be of demoniacal resolves. 5-6

Comment:

'Aśāstravihitaṁ ghoraṁ tapyante ye tapo janāḥ'— Those men perform violent austerities which are not sanctioned by the scriptures. It is because of their Tāmasika intellect (intellect enveloped in darkness) (Gītā 18/32) that they themselves don't know the ordinances of the scriptures. Moreover they are not prepared to accept those ordinances and act upon them, even if those ordinances are explained to them by a person.

'Dambhāhaṅkārasaṁyuktāḥ'— They are full of hopocrisy and egoism. They believe that the people who are engaged in adoration, meditation and the study of the scriptures are hypocrites. So they also pretend to be what they are not and are puffed up with pride because of their intelligence, wisdom and knowledge etc. They think that they can bring other people round to their view-point; and they need not listen to the scriptures because they possess enough knowledge.

'Kāmarāgabalānvitāḥ' —The term 'Kāma' stands for lust for worldly pleasures. They remain engrossed in those pleasures i.e., they remain attached to them. Impelled by the force of desire they have a thirst for them and so they want to secure and maintain them. Thus they hanker after worldly pleasures and prosperity and remain engrossed in them by regarding them as the only goal of human life. They have the feelings that if having obtained this human life they have not enjoyed worldly pleasures, they are just like beasts. If they have not acquired those materials for enjoyment, what have they gained ? Without those enjoyments their life has gone in vain. They are always given to sense enjoyments. They perform austerities obstinately with a view to acquire the materials for worldly enjoyment.

'Karśayantaḥ śarīrastham bhūtagrāmam'— They believe that austerities consist in tormenting the group of five elements (earth, water, fire, air, and ether) in their bodies. According to them austerity means bodily torture.

In the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth verses of this chapter there is the description of the austerities of the body, speech and mind. There is no mention of the physical torture. The austerity is performed very calmly without tormenting the body. But the austerities that are described in this verse are performed by tormenting the body against the ordinances of the scriptures. So they are called violent austerities.

'Māṁ caivāntaḥśarīrastham'— They also torment the Lord Who is lodged in their hearts. As God is seated in their hearts as their very self, so when they torment the self, they torment God. Moreover they torment Him by disobeying His teachings.

'Tānviddhyāsuraniścayān'— The Lord declares that such people should be known to be of demoniacal resolves. Here the expression 'Āsuraniścayān' does not denote the people of ordinary demoniac nature but those who are extremely demoniac, mean and atheistic.

An Important Fact

In the fourth verse the term 'Yajante' (Worship) has been used for those people who neglecting the ordinances of the scriptures perform worship with faith. But here the term 'Tapyante' (Practise) has been used for the people who intentionally neglect the ordinances of the scriptures and are also lacking in faith. The reason is that people of demoniac resolve attach great importance to violent austerities, according to their own fancy and whim. The mark of their austerity is tormentation of the body. They instead of believing in God, and the scriptures, believe in austerities. They perform violent austerities against the ordinances of the scriptures. They remain hungry for a long time, lie on thorn or spikes bare bodied, stand on one leg only, sit before burning fire and perform other violent austerities of such type in order to torment their bodies.

In the twenty-third verse of the sixteenth chapter it is mentioned that those, who

having cast aside the ordinances of the scriptures, act under the impulse of desire, attain neither perfection nor happiness nor the Supreme Goal. It means that they don't secure the full fruit of their actions because they attach importance to the external activities instead of the internal feelings. But here the people of demoniac resolves go to the lower wombs and hells because they are given to hypocrisy and egoism etc. Moreover they neither have faith nor want to listen to the ordinances of the scriptures nor act upon them.

In the twenty-third verse of the sixteenth chapter there is disobedience to the ordinance of the scriptures through indifference, in the first verse of this chapter there is disobedience through lack of knowledge while here there is intentional and wilful disobedience. Here the performance of austerities is opposed to faith, the ordinances of the scriptures and God and welfare of the people. Such type of opposition is not found among the people of the Rājasa and Tāmasa dispositions described any other where.

Link:–How to know the faith of a man who does not offer any sort of worship! The Lord explains that it can be recognized by the food which is dear to him.

आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ।
यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं शृणु ॥ ७ ॥

āhārastvapi sarvasya trividho bhavati priyaḥ
yajñastapastathā dānaṁ teṣāṁ bhedamimaṁ śṛṇu

The food which is dear to all is also of three kinds. So are the sacrifices, austerities and gifts. Hear thou the distinction of these. 7

Comment:

'Āhārastvapi sarvasya trividho bhavati priyaḥ'— In the fourth verse the Lord explained the means of ascertaining the conviction of a person by his Sāttvika, Rājasa and Tāmasa worship. But how to know the conviction of a person who has no faith and interest in worship? The answer is that every person whether he is a believer or a non-believer, belonging to any sect or religion, has to eat food. So a man's conviction or faith can be known by the food which is dear to him: In what dishes a man is naturally tempted viz., on hearing, seeing and tasting the food articles, in which the mind is attracted, that will determine his Sāttvika, Rājasa or Tāmasa faith.

Someone may think that here is the description of three kinds of food. If it is viewed from the gross point of view, it may appear correct. But if we ponder over it deeply, it is not a fact. This is not the description of three kinds of food. But actually here is the description of a person's taste for food to judge his faith.

The terms 'Sarvasya' (All) and 'Priyaḥ' (Dear) have been used to indicate that each person out of all the human beings, wants to eat a particular kind of food — Sāttvika, Rājasa or Tāmasa, which is dear to him. Thus his nature is found out from the nature of the food he likes and eats. Similarly 'Yajñastapastathā dānam' (Sacrifice, austerity and charity)* are also of three kinds. It proves that a person studies the book, keeps company, visits the place and is engaged in different sorts of activities according to his Sāttvika, Rājasa or Tāmasa temperament.

'Teṣāṁ bhedamimaṁ śṛṇu' —Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to hear the distinction of sacrifice, austerity and charity according to a man's temperament. A man offers

* Here the term 'Yajña' stands only for sacrifice, not for all duties or actions that are to be performed because besides the 'Yajña' (Sacrifice), austerity and charity are given. Pilgrimage and fast etc., can also be included in them and they may occupy secondary positions.

charity to a Brāhmaṇa (member of the priest class) while another person offers charity to a common man. Someone keeps company with virtuous persons whose food and conduct etc., are pure while the other one keeps company with evil persons.*

It means that people of Sāttvika temperament like Sāttvika (Good) food, company, environment and actions etc., while the people of Rājasika, (Passionate) temperament have Rājasika tastes and those of Tāmasika, (Ignorant) temperament like food, company, environment and actions which are not sanctioned by the scriptures.

आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।
रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥ ८ ॥

āyuḥsattvabalārogyasukhaprītivivardhanāḥ
rasyāḥ snigdhāḥ sthirā hṛdyā āhārāḥ sāttvikapriyāḥ

The foods which promote life, vitality, strength, health, joy and cheerfulness, which are sweet, soft, nourishing and agreeable are dear to the 'good.' 8

Comment:

The foods, which promote life, vitality strength, purity, health, happiness† and peace, which are sweet and juicy (fruit, milk etc.) which provide strength to the heart and lungs and which are oily such as butter, ghee, almonds, cashewnut and raisins etc., are dear to the good. They can be of four kinds– those which are eaten, those which are drunk, those which are licked and those which are sucked. The person who likes such foods is of Sāttvika (Good) temperament.

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः ।
आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥ ९ ॥

kaṭvamlalavaṇātyuṣṇatīkṣṇarūkṣavidāhinaḥ
āhārā rājasasyeṣṭā duḥkhaśokāmayapradāḥ

The foods which are bitter, sour, saltish, very hot, pungent, dry and burning, producing pain, grief and disease are liked by the 'passionate'. 9

Comment:

The foods which are bitter such as 'Karelā' and aloe plant, which are sour such as tamarind and lemon, which are saltish having excessive alkalie and salts, which are very hot viz., steaming, which are pungent such as chillies, which are dry such as parched grains (lacking butter, milk etc.) and which are burning such as mustard etc.

'Āhārā rājasasyeṣṭā'— Such foods (which are eaten, drunk, licked and sucked) are liked by the passionate. Thus a man's faith is known by the food he takes.

'Duḥkhaśokāmayapradāḥ'— Such foods produce pain, grief and disease. When a person eats such food, he experiences pain and burning sensation in the throat, tongue and palate etc. He is not pleased but is rather grieved after eating such foods and they cause sickness in the body.

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* As among animals deer accompany deer, cows accompany cows and horses accompany horses, similarly fools keep company with fools and the learned have friendship with the learned because friendship is maintained among persons of the same temperament and conduct.

† Though the favourable foods are dear even to the passionate but their love for them will change into poison (18/38). Similarly the ignorant also like them but their liking for them will conduce them to sleep, indolence and heedlessness (entertainment, ill talk and evil habits etc.) (18/39).

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत्।
उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम्॥ १०॥

yātayāmaṁ gatarasaṁ pūti paryuṣitaṁ ca yat
ucchiṣṭamapi cāmedhyaṁ bhojanaṁ tāmasapriyam

That which is half cooked or half ripe tasteless, putrid, stale, refuse and impure is the food dear to the 'ignorant'. 10

Comment:

'Yātayāmam'— It means half cooked, half ripe, over cooked and over ripe food and unseasoned fruit and vegetables etc., kept usable through refrigeration etc.

'Gatarasam'— The fruits etc., which lose their juice due to exposure etc., or whose essence through machinery has been taken out are 'Gatarasam'.

'Pūti'— Putrid foods are those whose smell is offensive, they are onion and garlic etc. Moreover wine etc.,* which are rendered foul through fermentation are also putrid.

'Paryuṣitam'— The cooked food such as vegetables and 'capātis' prepared by mixing water and salt in them which has been kept over night is stale. But the sweets prepared from milk, butter, ghee and sugar don't get stale as they don't get spoiled when they are allowed to stay over night.

'Ucchiṣṭam'— The food which is left on the plate after a meal or the food which is either seen, or smelt or partly eaten by a cow, a cat, a dog or a crow is called refuse (Ucchiṣṭam).

'Amedhyam'— Meat and eggs etc., are impure food. They are so impure that a man has to take a bath even if he touches them. The Lord does not want even to name the articles of the impure food.

'Api ca'— This expression conveys that besides the above mentioned foods, all other articles of food forbidden by the scriptures – such as turnip and carrots etc., prohibited according to one's stage of life or social order etc., are also included in the Tāmasika food.

'Bhojanam tāmasapriyam'— Such food is dear to the Tāmasika person. Thus a man's faith is known by the food which is dear to him.

Even if the Sāttvika food is eaten having attachment to it, it becomes Rājasika. If it is eaten in excess, it becomes Tāmasika. Similarly the dry or stale food offered to a beggar is Rājasika or Tāmasika. But if the same food is offered to God with devotion and then it is eaten less than the appetite† by chanting the name of the Lord, it becomes Sāttvika.

An Important Fact Pertaining to the Topic

In this context it seems as if there is the description of three types of food. But actually here is the description of a person's inclination which can be judged by the nature of the food which is dear to him. The following points can clarify it.

(1) In the seventh verse of this chapter the Lord uses the term 'Sarvasya' to indicate that all human beings like three kinds of food according to their inclinations. That inclination decides a man's conviction. The term 'Priyaḥ' (Dear) has also been used in

* In the scriptures a drunkard has been called a great sinner– He who steals gold, he who drinks wine, he who has sexual intercourse with his preceptor's wife and he who murders a Brāhmaṇa – these four are great sinners and the fifth great sinner is he who keeps their company. It means that drinking is one of the worst evils, worse than even the non-vegetarian diet.

The holy water of the Ganges purifies everything. But the goblet is not purified even with it. So how much impure a drunkard is – one can't imagine.

Its preparation involves a lot of violence. It kills the germs of righteousness i.e., the feelings and impressions of righteousness are destroyed by drinking wine and a man has a downfall.

† The quantity of the food should be moderate, neither more nor less.

the eighth and tenth verses and 'Iṣṭa' (Dear) in the ninth verse which indicate a man's inclination or taste. Had there been the context of the food, the Lord instead of using the term 'Priyaḥ' (Dear) or 'Iṣṭa' would have said that these are Sāttvika foods or the Tāmasika ones etc.

(2) The Second argument is that while mentioning the Sāttvika food the Lord first explained the result of taking Sāttvika food and then the Sāttvika food. It is so because a Sāttvika person thinks of the consequences of eating a particular food or performing an action before he eats the food or performs an action.

A Rājasika person first eats food and then thinks of its adverse effect. So in Rājasika food first there is the description of food and then its result in the form, the pain, grief and sickness.

As far as the effect of the Tāmasika food is concerned, the Lord has not even mentioned it. It is so because a Tāmasika person out of delusion does not think of the adverse effect of the food eaten. He does not think—Whether it is earned by fair means or foul, whether it is pure or impure, whether it is sanctioned by the scriptures or not. He eats the food like an animal. It means that he, who eats Sāttvika food, possesses a divine nature while he, who eats either Rājasika or Tāmasika food, possesses a demoniac nature.

(3) Had the Lord described the food, He would have described the food in more details such as the livelihood should be earned by honest means; the food should be cooked by wearing clean clothes in a well cleaned and pure kitchen; it should first be offered to God and then it should be eaten by thinking of Him and chanting His name. This sort of food is Sāttvika.

Similarly He would have described the Rājasa food. The livelihood should be earned by fair means or foul having predominance of pride and selfishness. The food should be eaten for taste and fashion and it should be eaten by having attachment to it. This food is Rājasika.

In the same way the food is earned by foul means such as falsehood, fraud, theft and robbery etc., without any sense of purity and cleanliness in an impure atmosphere. The food items may be meat and egg etc. No attention is paid to how the food is cooked. One who takes food does not wash his hands and feet and takes it with his shoes on. No cleanliness is maintained and it is eaten in an impure atmosphere. Such food is Tāmasika.

But here the Lord has described the foods which are dear to the Sāttvika (Good), the Rājasika (Passionate) and the Tāmasika (Ignorant) so that their inclinations or faith can be known.

(4) Besides this in the Gītā where there is description of food, there is description only of the eaters as 'others restrict their food' (4/30), 'Yoga is not for him who eats too much but for him who is temperate in food' (6/16-17), 'What ever thou eatest' (9/27) and 'He who eats but little' (18/52).

Similarly in the seventh verse of this chapter the term 'Tathā (Also) denotes that a man performs sacrifice and austerity and offers charity according to his Sāttvika, Rājasika or Tāmasika temperament. Similarly in this chapter from the eleventh verse to the twenty-second verse also there is the description of the nature of those who perform sacrifice and austerity and offer charity.

An Important Thought Over Food

In the Upaniṣads (Portions of the different branches of the Vedas) it is mentioned 'As is the food, so is the mind'. As the food a man eats so is his mind. So a man should eat pure food because it purifies his mind. The place, the seat, the scene and the atmosphere where he eats the food should be pure and holy as they also effect the mind. Moreover the feelings and thought of the cook should be pure and good.

Before having the meal a person should wash both the hands, both the feet and the mouth. He should sit on a clean and pure seat with his face towards the east or the north. Then he should offer the food to the Lord by reciting the verse,

"Whosoever offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, that offering of love, of the pure of heart I accept" (Gītā 9/26). After this he should take a little water on his palm and reciting the verse "The act of offering is God, the oblation is God. By God is it offered into the fire of God. God is verily to be attained by him who always sees God in action" (Gītā 4/24), should drink it. Then he should put the first morsel of food into his mouth by chanting the name of the Lord. While chewing a morsel, he should recite the sacred formula (hymn) of sixteen words 'Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare.' (or chant the name of his favourite deity) two times. Thus he chews a morsel thirty-two times because there are sixteen words in the sacred hymn (formula). Thus the food becomes digestible and nourishing and he remains absorbed in the adoration to the Lord by chanting His names which purify the food.

If a person while having a meal has evil propensities such as hatred, envy, jealousy, fear and greed, his food is not digested well and he suffers from indigestion. So while eating food he should be free from all these evil propensities and should remain calm and pleased. It is heard that a dog is allowed to run after the calf before the cow is milked. The cow grows angry after seeing the dog. That milk is offered to the soldiers so that they may become cruel.

An experiment was made on some horses. Some of them were fed with the milk of cows while others were fed with the milk of buffaloes. The former could cross a stream while the latter could not. Similarly if there is a fight between a bullock and a buffalo, the buffalo defeats the bullock. But if both of them draw a cart in the heat of the sun, the bullock is more active. The reason is that the milk of the cow contains Sāttvika nourishment.

As good and evil feelings have their effect on food, so has a look. If an evil person or a hungry dog has a look at the food, it becomes impure. So what to do? He who wants to eat the food should think that Lord Himself in that form has come to eat the food. So first he should offer a part of it to him and then eat the remaining food himself. By doing so, the food is purified.

Secondly those who take the share of the calf from the milk of the cow make the milk impure. If they milk the cow after the calf has been well-fed, the milk is pure.

The feelings of the person who eats, and of the person who offers food have also their effect on the food. (i) The food which is offered with a great pleasure is of a superior quality. (ii) The food is offered with pleasure but the eater thinks that he has saved some money by receiving free food—it is of the medium quality. (iii) The food which is offered with the feeling of compulsion that he has been forced to offer the food because some one has arrived and the eater eats the food having the feeling of selfishness – that food is of the inferior quality.

In the Gītā it is mentioned that good persons rejoice in the welfare of all beings (5/25,12/4). It means that the things and actions of the persons who rejoice in the welfare of other beings are pure and holy.

The following verses should be recited when the meal is over–

"All beings come forth from food, food is produced from rain, rain ensues from sacrifice and sacrifice is born of action. Action has its origin in Brahma (Vedas) and the Vedas spring from the Imperishable (God); therefore the all-pervading (Brahma) ever rests in sacrifice" (Gītā 3/14-15).

Then in order to digest the food he should recite "Becoming the fire which dwells in the bodies of living beings and mingling with the upward and downward breaths, I digest the four kinds of food" (Gītā 15/14), and move the navel with the middle finger slowly.

Link:–Having explained that the faith of a person can be known by his worship or by the food which is dear to him, the Lord now explains the three kinds of sacrifice by which a man's faith or inclination is known.

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते ।
यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥ ११ ॥

aphalākāṅkṣibhiryajño vidhidṛṣṭo ya ijyate
yaṣṭavyameveti manaḥ samādhāya sa sāttvikaḥ

The sacrifice which is performed, according to the scriptural law, by those who expect no reward and believe firmly that it is their duty to offer the sacrifice, is Sāttvika (Good). 11

Comment:

'Yaṣṭavyameveti'— Being blessed with the human body a man becomes eligible to performs the sacrifice according to his caste and social order with the firm belief that it is his duty to do so and he should not expect any reward either here or hereafter. The terms 'Eva' (Only) and 'Iti' (Thus) have been used to emphasize the fact that it is his duty and it must be done. He should have no other consideration except performance of duty for duty's sake.

'Aphalākāṅkṣibhiḥ'— A man expects no reward either here or hereafter for the sacrifice which he offers.

'Yajño vidhidṛṣṭo ya ijyate'—The sacrifice should be offered according to the ordinance of the scriptures.

If he expects no reward, then why should he perform the sacrifice? The Lord answers 'Manaḥ samādhāya' (Mind having fixed) i.e., it is his duty to perform it.

What is Sāttvika Sacrifice?

The term 'Yaṣṭavyam'* denotes that sacrifices should be offered as a duty. When a man offers the sacrifice having desire of gaining honour, praise and riches here, and heaven and luxuries in the next birth he is attached to the sacrifice. But if he performs it without any kind of reward, his affinity with it is renounced and (in absence of selfishness and pride) the agent's ego is purified.

In it the there is a vital point that when a doer performs an action, he gets affinity with it. An action is the image of the doer viz., as is the doer, so is his action. The Lord in the third verse of this chapter declares. "As is a man's faith, so is he", and he acts according to his faith. It means that as affinity of a doer with an action remains, there is every possibility of his getting in bondage. But if he performs an action as a matter of duty without having any attachment to it, his affinity is renounced and he gets liberated. How is an action to be performed only for duty's sake ? A person has to do nothing for himself. He should have no affinity with any object, time and place etc. He should perform his duty according to the need of the hour. Thus he will not desire to reap the fruit of action and will not be bound.

On the other hand the attachment leads him to bondage. It is declared in the Gītā—"The Yogīs (Men of action) perform actions only with their senses, mind, intellect and body, abandoning attachment" (5/11). It means that a Karmayogī should not have any affinity with body, senses and mind. It also implies that he should not have any affinity with the ladle, the place and materials for oblation.

The sacrifice and its fruit both have a beginning and an end, they appear and disappear while the soul is imperishable and eternal. But he (the soul) assumes his affinity with the actions and their fruits. Until he renounces this affinity, he gets entangled in the cycle of birth and death (Gītā 5/12).

The Sattvaguṇa enables a man to renounce his affinity with the world and leads him to God-Realization when he transcends the three Guṇas†. All

* Duty is the action which should be performed, which is according to one's capacity and by which the aim is achieved.

† In the Śrīmadbhāgavata in the twenty-fifth chapter of the eleventh section besides the three Guṇas there is also the description of the state which transcends the three Guṇas while in the Gītā there is the description of the three Guṇas only. Why is it so when Lord Krsna is the speaker in both of them? The answer is that when the sacrifice is performed as a duty (17/11), gifts are made as a duty (17/20) and

the qualities of the divine nature are Sāttvika. But the person possessing the divine nature realizes God only when he transcends the three Guṇas (Modes of nature).

अभिसंधाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चैव यत्।
इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम्॥ १२॥

abhisaṁdhāya tu phalaṁ dambhārthamapi caiva yat
ijyate bharataśreṣṭha taṁ yajñaṁ viddhi rājasam

The sacrifice which is offered in expectation of reward or for the sake of display, know, O best of the Bharatas (Arjuna), that sacrifice to be Rājasika (Passionate). 12

Comment:

'Abhisaṁdhāya tu phalam'—The sacrifice which is performed to acquire the desirable and to avert the undesirable is 'Rājasa sacrifice'. If any one performs a sacrifice in order to obtain riches, name and fame, honour, obedient servants, sons, family and heaven etc., this is desire to acquire the desirable. Our enemies should be destroyed; we should never be dishonoured, disrespected and slighted; we should never face unfavourable circumstances—this is desire to avert the undesirable.

'Dambhārthamapi caiva yat'— The sacrifice which is offered by a man showing himself off as a virtuous, good, charitable, righteous and great man for advertisement and for self glorification is Rājasika. It includes the sacrifice offered by the people of demoniacal nature as described in 16/15 and 16/17.

'Ijyate bharataśreṣṭha taṁ yajñaṁ viddhi rājasam'— The sacrifice which is offered in expectation of reward or for ostentation is Rājasika.

Such a sacrifice is offered strictly according to the ordinance of the scriptures. The reason is that if it is not performed according to the ordinance of the scriptures, it will not bear full fruit. Similarly if either the method or the action happens to be contrary to the sanctional one, it will bear the contrary fruit i.e., it may be injurious to the performer. But the person who offers a sacrifice only for as tentation does not care much about the ordinance of the scriptures.

By using the term 'Viddhi' Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to emphasize the fact that the mundane attachment (desire) is the root of the cycle of birth and death. So Arjuna should be aware of it.

विधिहीनमसृष्टान्नं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम्।
श्रद्धाविरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते॥ १३॥

vidhihīnamasṛṣṭānnaṁ mantrahīnamadakṣiṇam
śraddhāvirahitaṁ yajñaṁ tāmasaṁ paricakṣate

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an action is performed as a duty (18/19), the person has no affinity with actions and their fruits, and so the Sāttvika actions turn into transcendental ones.

At the end of the seventeenth chapter also the Lord while describing the Lord's name 'Sat' out of the three names 'Om,' 'Tat,' 'Sat' declares that all the actions which are performed for the sake of the Lord become 'Sat' viz., real (transcendental) (17/27). It means that the actions of a Karmayogī become transcendental when he renounces attachment to the actions and their fruits, while the actions of a Bhaktiyogī become transcendental when they are performed for the sake of the Lord. So there is no description of the state which transcends the three Guṇas.

In the Gītā it is also mentioned the Sattvaguṇa (The mode of goodness) binds (14/6) and the those established in Sattvaguṇa rise to the higher regions (14/18). Why? The answer is that it is not Sattvaguṇa which binds but it is attachment to it which binds (14/6, 13/21). Similarly the assumption that one is established in Sattvaguṇa also leads him to bondage (14/18).

The sacrifice which is not in conformity with the ordinances of the scriptures, in which no food is distributed, no hymns are chanted, no fees are paid and which is faithless – that sacrifice is of the nature of ignorance viz., Tāmasika. 13

Comment:

'Vidhihīnam'— There are different methods for different kinds of sacrifice in which there is guidance for the altar, utensil for the oblation, direction and seat etc. Similarly different materials are used in the sacrifice of different gods and goddesses etc., as in the sacrifice of the Goddess Durgā the cloth and the material of red colour are used. In Tāmasa sacrifice the ordinances are not followed, but are renounced due to indifference.

'Asṛṣṭānnam'— The Tāmasika people who offer wealth as sacrifice don't offer food as charity to the Brāhmaṇas because they think that the Brāhmaṇas will become idle if they get free food and they will not work.

'Mantrahīnam'— In Tāmasika sacrifice sacred hymns are not chanted because the Tāmasika people think that a sacrifice is performed by offering oblation because it kills the germs, and fragrance spreads. But there is no need of the chanting of sacred hymns.

'Adakṣiṇam'— No sacrificial fees are paid to the priest or Brāhmaṇas in Tāmasika sacrifice because the people of the Tāmasika temperament think that they have fed them already. If they offer fees to them, they will become idle and lazy and will create the problem of unemployment and so on. According to them such Brāhmaṇas are burden on the earth. But they don't think that if they don't offer fees or food to the Brāhamaṇas, the Brāhmaṇas may or may not become idle and lazy but they themselves will become heedless by renouncing their duty.

'Śraddhāvirahitaṁ yajñaṁ tāmasaṁ paricakṣate'— As far as offering of the oblation into the fire is concerned, the Tāmasika people think that it is very foolish* that the food articles such as grain, churned butter, barley, rice, coconut, date, palm etc., which are useful to maintain the body, should be burnt in fire. If they perform sacrifice, that is only to gain name, fame, honour and praise without obeying the scriptural ordinance, without distributing food, without chanting hymns and without paying fees.

They have no faith either in the scripture or sacred hymns or sacrifice or its fruit out of delusion. They act contrary to the ordinance of the scriptures. They are just like the people of the Kali age who don't believe in caste and social order and who are engrossed in activities contrary to the ordinances of the scriptures.

In Tāmasa sacrifice a man having cast side the ordinance of the sacriptures acts according to his own sweet will (Gītā 16/23) and it is offered without faith (Gītā 17/28). These two feelings are involved in it. So he attains neither the mystic power, nor the highest goal nor even happiness here or hereafter. He rather descends into the womb of an insect, a bird or a beast or into the infernal regions (14/18). Absence of faith is the cause in their damnation. As they perform forbidden actions without faith, they must get punishment for it.

In a sacrifice if the agent, knowledge, actions, fortitude, intellect, company, the

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* When a farmer mixes the seed in the earth, its production is thousands of times more than the seed sown when the crop is ripe. Similarly the oblation offered by chanting scriptural hymns will certainly bear fruit. So far as the seed mixed in the earth in concerned, it is material as the earth is insentient while the oblation offered into the fire is divine because gods are sentient; and that oblation results in rain which is very useful.

Manujī has declared:

The oblation offered into fire strengthens the rays of the sun and those strengthened rays result in rain (Even the modern scientists accept this fact).

All beings come forth from food, from rain food is produced (Gītā 3/14) and rain ensues from sacrifice (Gītā 3/14).

scripture and eatables are Sāttvika, it is Sāttvika sacrifice, if they are Rājasika, it is Rājasika sacrifice and if they are Tāmasika, it is Tāmasika sacrifice.

Link:–Having explained the three kinds of sacrifice in the preceding three verses the Lord in the next three verses explains the three kinds of penance of the body, of speech and of mind (Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika will be explained at a later stage).

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।
ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥ १४ ॥

devadvijaguruprājñapūjanaṁ śaucamārjavam
brahmacaryamahiṁsā ca śārīraṁ tapa ucyate

Worship of the gods, of the twice-born, of teachers and of the wise (liberated soul), purity, uprightness, continence and non-violence—this is said to be the penance of the body. 14

Comment:

'Devadvijaguruprājñapūjanam'—Here the term 'Deva' particularly stands for Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Śiva, Gaṇeśa, Goddess Durgā and the Sun-god, the five chief deities of the category of the Lord. So a devotee should worship his favourite deity out of the five without having any desire for fruit.*

Twelve Āditya, eight Vasus, eleven Rudras and two Aśvinīkumāras—these thirty-three gods are also included in the term 'Deva'. The gods who are worshipped in sacrifices, pilgrimages, fasts (vows) on special festivals and occasions such as sacred thread ceremony and marriages etc., are also included in the term 'Deva'. Their worship is sanctioned by the scriptures. So they should be worshipped in accordance with the ordinance of the scriptures.

Though the term 'Dvija' (Twice-born) denotes the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas but here in the context of worship it stands only for the Brāhmaṇas.

Here the term 'Guru' (Teachers) stand for parents, elders, preceptors and those who are superior in age, learning and social order etc. Obedience and service to them, offering flowers, incense, light and food to them and attempts to please them – all these are included in their worship.

Here the term 'Prājña' (The wise) stands for the liberated souls. Their worship consists in carrying out their orders, following their principles and treating them with reverence from the heart. In fact Brāhmaṇas and preceptors are venerable from the worldly point of view. But a liberated soul is adorable and venerable from spiritual point of view. We should respect him from the core of our heart rather than externally. Respect which comes from one's heart is real respect.

Śaucam'—Here the term 'Śaucam' (Purity) stands for external purity i.e., purity of the body with water and earth. External purity causes internal purity. Through purity a man realizes that filth in the form of excrement, urine, perspiration, phlegm and spit etc., continuously comes out of the body though it is purified again and again. Moreover this body consists of impure bones, flesh and marrow etc. This body is nothing but a factory to produce filth and urine. Being conscious of the impurity and filthness of the body a man rises above the body. Having risen above the body, he has no sense of superiority in him in respect of social order, stage of life, status and position etc. In order to inculcate these feelings, purity is observed.

These days some people complain that those who maintain purity hate others. It is wrong. Maintenance of purity does not mean hate for others. It merely means that this body

* The devotees worship their favourite Deity by regarding Him or Her as the Supreme while the others are regarded as gods by them.

can never remain pure though it may be made pure again and again with water and earth etc.

The learned people regard the body as impure because it is born of the parents; semen and menstrual excretion, it is nourished by the food eaten, it is full of excrement, urine, spit, saliva and sweat etc., it is mortal and it is made clean with water and earth.

'Ārjavam'— It consists in the absence of crookedness i.e., there should not be any stiffness and twist in the body. The man who has pride becomes crooked. So a striver who wants to attain salvation should renounce pride. By doing so he develops uprightness.

'Brahmacaryam'— It consists in abstaining from sex. One who observes celibacy should take the following precautions.

(i) He should not remember the past sexual intercourse. (ii) He should not talk to the women with attachment. (iii) He should not joke with them. (iv) He should not gaze at them. (v) He should not talk to them in loneliness. (vi) He should not think of sexual intercourse. (vii) He should be determined not to indulge in sexual intercourse. (viii) He should not indulge in sexual intercourse.

A person in the state of celibacy and in retired order (Vānaprastha) and renounced order (Saṁnyāsa) must preserve his seminal fluid in action and thought. A householder can have sexual intercourse with his wife after the period of the mense every month according to the ordinance of the scriptures. Such a person who observes this rule is considered a celibate even during his family life. A widow who controls her sex desire attains the same goal as a celibate does.

In fact a celibate is he who is firm in the vow of celibacy (Gītā 6/14). But if there is seminal emission during sleep or because of a disease etc., when a person does not want discharge of semen, it means that he is firm in celibacy. So a celibate should have pure feelings and never allow his mind to be diverted towards a woman. Even if by chance it is diverted he should have a firm determination to observe celibacy.

'Ahiṁsā'—Total lack of violence is Ahiṁsā. A man commits violence out of selfishness, anger, greed and delusion. Usurpation of others property is violence out of selfishness, hurting or murdering others is violence out of anger, killing an animal for meat and leather or murdering a person in order to get money is violence out of greed and striking a dog or plucking a branch or kicking anyone is violence out of delusion.

'Śārīraṁ tapa ucyate'—Worship of the gods etc., purity, uprightness, celibacy and non-violence – this is penance of the body. Pilgrimage, vow and self-control should also be included in the penance of the body. The penance, in which the body is tortured, is not the noble type of penance because such a person who performs violent penance is known to be demoniac in his resolve (17/6). Noble penance consists in following the path of self-discipline according to the ordinance of the scriptures and family traditions etc., and also in tolerating the unfavourable circumstances happily. It involves control over the body, senses and mind.

In the Yoga where there is description of its eight parts, there is the description of 'Yama' first of all. This Yama (self-restraint) consists of harmlessness, veracity (truthfulness), continence, nonstealing and non-acquisition of property (Yogadarśana 2/30). There are also five Niyamas (religious vows). They are purity, contentment, askesis, study of the Vedas and self-surrender to God (Yogadarśana 2/32). Out of these two more importance is attached to Yama because in it there is control over the body, mind and senses etc., while in Niyama a man has to follow the religious vows.*

A lay man may regard bodily torture as bodily penance. But actually having been detached from the mundane, one who practises self-restraint or renunciation is superier to him who tortures his body, because peace immediately follows renunciation (Gītā 12/12). External penance does not lead to God-Realization, but it can

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* The demons such as Hiraṇyakaśipu, Hiraṇyākṣa and Rāvaṇa etc., possessed Niyamas i.e., they practised religious vows but they had no Yamas viz., self-restraint.

be conducive to God-Realization through internal purity. So a striver besides practising Yamas (Self-restraint) should also practise Niyamas (Religious vow) as and when required.

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत्।
स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥ १५ ॥

anudvegakaraṁ vākyaṁ satyaṁ priyahitaṁ ca yat
svādhyāyābhyasanaṁ caiva vāṅmayaṁ tapa ucyate

The utterance (of words) which gives no offence, which is truthful, pleasant and beneficial and the regular study of the Vedas – this is said to be the penance of speech. 15

Comment:

'Anudvegakaraṁ vākyam'— The utterances which do not cause annoyance and pain to others either at present or in future are called 'Anudvegakaram'.

'Satyaṁ priyahitaṁ ca yat'— The truthful utterance is that which states the bare facts in order to convey to others the correct idea of what one has actually read, heard, seen or experienced without having the feelings of selfishness and pride.*

The loving, sweet, artless and gentle words which are free from cruelty, pungency, sarcasm, slander and insult etc., are 'Priya'.

The words which are altogether free from violence, envy, jealousy and enmity etc., which are full of love, compassion forgiveness, generosity and well-wishes and which do evils to none at present or in future are 'Hita', viz., beneficial.

'Svādhyāyābhyasanaṁ caiva'— The study of the sacred books such as the Gītā, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Bhāgavata etc., and explaining them to others, and uttering the glories of the characters of the Lord and His devotees and narrating them to others is 'Svādhyāya'.

Recitation of the sacred books such as the Gītā etc., again, and again, learning them by heart and utterance of the names, glories and praises of the Lord again and again is 'Abhyasana' (Practice).

'Caiva'— These two terms denote the other point of the penance of speech such as not slandering others, not narrating the faults of others, not to indulge in idle talk and not to study such books which conduce desire (lust), anger and greed etc.

'Vāṅmayaṁ tapa ucyate'— The speech (words) which has the above mentioned marks, is the penance of speech.†

मनःप्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः।
भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानसमुच्यते ॥ १६ ॥

manaḥprasādaḥ saumyatvaṁ maunamātmavinigrahaḥ
bhāvasaṁśuddhirityetattapo mānasamucyate

Cheerfulness of mind, gentleness, mental-silence, self-control, purity of thought—this is called the penance of mind 16.

Comment:

'Manaḥprasādaḥ' — Cheerfulness of mind is called 'Manaḥprasādaḥ'. Cheerfulness which is caused by the contact

* A man should utter true and pleasant words. He should neither utter unpleasant true words nor pleasant false words— this is eternal Dharma (Righteousness) (Manusmrti 4/138).

† Sweet (Pleasant) words please human beings, beasts and birds. So a man should utter only pleasant words. Why should one show miserliness in speech?

of persons, things and circumstances etc., is not permanent but short lived. But the cheerfulness which is revealed by giving up evils, remains permanent and the mind then becomes serene.

A man's peace of mind is disturbed when he depends on the perishable worldly persons such as his wife, sons and other members of the family as well as property and riches etc. If instead of depending on the perishable he depends only on the Lord Who is eternal and imperishable, he can never lose the peace of mind.

The methods to remain cheerful.

(i) One should be free from attachment and aversion to persons and circumstances etc.

(ii) One should not be partial out of selfishness and pride.

(iii) One should be full of divine traits such as compassion, forgiveness and generosity etc.

(iv) One should have the feelings of the welfare of all beings.

(v) One whose diet is balanced and regular, whose nature is of living in loneliness, who is reserved, who is temperate in sleep and recreation according to the ordinance of the scriptures. Such a striver gains cheerfulness of mind very quickly.

'Saumyatvam'— A person who remains free from the feelings of violence, cruelty, ruthlessness, ferocity, jealousy etc., and who has faith in the Lord's virtues such as compassion etc., and His omnipresence, possesses gentleness or placidity. His placidity is not disturbed even if any one uses harsh words for him or insults him or accuses him or there is loss in business etc.

'Maunam'— Here the term 'Maunam' stands for the mental penance. Real silence consists in remaining equanimous in the pairs of opposites such as favourable and unfavourable circumstances, union and disunion, attachment and aversion, pleasure and pain etc.*

Constant application of the mind to the words of saints to the thought of the virtues, glories and character of the Lord as described in the sacred texts such as the Gītā, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Bhāgavata and also to the thought of the welfare and salvation of living beings is also included in the term 'Maunam'.

'Ātmavinigrahaḥ'— When mind becomes thoroughly disciplined and steady, it is called 'Ātmavinigrahaḥ'. Moreover real self-control consists in concentrating the mind and diverting it as and when a person so desires. It means that he should not be controlled by the mind rather he should control it.

'Bhāvasaṁśuddhiḥ'— The pure state of mind free from selfishness and pride having the thought of the welfare of others is the purity of nature. A man's nature becomes pure when he thinks of the Lord and depends only on Him and the nature becomes impure when he depends on the perishable world.

'Ityetattapo mānasamucyate'— Thus the penance which has predominance of mind is called the penance of mind.

Link:–Now the Lord in the next three verses describes 'Sāttvika' (good) Rājasika (passionate) and Tāmasika (dull or full of ignorance) penances.

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत्त्रिविधं नरैः ।
अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्युक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥ १७ ॥

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* Here the the term 'Maunam' does not stand for absence of speech. Had it been so, it would have been included in the penance of speech.

In the Gītā it is seen that Arjuna puts questions attaching importance to actions while Lord Krsna answers attaching importance to feelings. In the fifty-fourth verse of the second chapter Arjuna asked "How does the man of stable mind speak?" The Lord replied that he who is neither happy in favourable circumstances nor unhappy in unfavourable ones, is a sage of stable mind.

śraddhayā parayā taptaṁ tapastattrividhaṁ naraiḥ
aphalākāṅkṣibhiryuktaiḥ sāttvikaṁ paricakṣate

The threefold penance practised with utmost faith by a man of balanced mind without the expectation of reward is called Sāttvika(good). 17

Comment:

'Śraddhayā parayā taptam'—The three kinds of penance of the body, speech and mind must be performed and its performance is a man's foremost duty and it is a panacea to realize the aim of human life*. By performing the penance thoroughly, a man gets established in the self which is the goal of life. So a striver should perform the penance with faith reverence and zeal facing all the obstacles.

'Aphalākāṅkṣibhiryuktaiḥ naraiḥ'—Here the term 'Naraiḥ' (men) with two adjectives denotes that man can inculcate all virtues in him and can get rid of all evil propensities such as desire and delusion etc. Moreover men alone can perform actions without the desire for their rewards. As far as other living beings are concerned, they possess only a few virtues.

The Lord has used the term 'Nara' (Man) in Sāttvika penance but He has not used it in Rājasika and Tāmasika penances. It means that those men who don't renounce evil propensities such a desire, hypocrisy and delusion in this human body, which is bestowed only for God-Realization (salvation), don't deserve to be called men. Here the term 'Naraiḥ (Men) has been used for those persons who perform penances without having any expectation for their fruit.

'Tapastattrividham'—This term 'Trividham' (Threefold) has been used only in the Sāttvika penance while in the Rājasika and the Tāmasika ones the terms 'Yat' 'Tat' (which) have been used. It means that the threefold penance (of the body, mind and speech) can be thoroughly included only in the Sāttvika penance. In Rājasika and Tāmasika penances they can be partly included. Out of these two, in the Rājasika penance more marks are included while in the Tāmasika one only a few marks are found because the aim of the people who perform Tāmasika penance is to torture others out of delusion.

Secondly in the thirteenth chapter from the seventh to the eleventh verses there is a description of the twenty virtues which make for wisdom (knowledge). Out of them there are three marks—purity, straightforwardness and non-violence of the penance of the body. There are two marks of the penance of the mind namely, self control and 'Maunam' (Equanimity). Similarly there are twenty-six marks of the person who is endowed with divine nature in the first three verses of the sixteenth chapter. Out of them there are three marks purity, non-violence and straight forwardness of the penance of the body and two marks—truth and study of the scriptures of the penance of speech. So the virtues of wisdom which lead to self-realization or the divine traits which lead to salvation can't be Rājasa (of the mode of passion) or Tāmasa (of the mode of ignorance). So the Rājasika and Tāmasika penances can't include the penances of the body, mind and speech thoroughly; they can include them only partly.

Thirdly a person who studies the Gītā from the beginning to the end comes to know that its aim is to enable a man to attain salvation. The reason is that Arjuna asks Lord Kṛṣṇa to tell him what is good for him i.e., by which he can attain to the highest good (2/7; 3/2; 5/1). The Lord also explains the means by which men may attain to the highest good. Therefore in the Gītā out of the three modes of nature the Sāttvika should be accepted while the Rājasika and the Tāmasika should be neglected. The reason is that the former one

* The penance of the body, mind and speech is thoroughly performed only when a person has an aim of renouncing affinity with the perishable.

is conducive to liberation while the latter ones are conducive to bondage. Therefore the Lord has used the term 'Trividham' (Threefold) in order to explain that the Sāttvika penance includes the threefold penance of the body, mind and speech.

'Sāttvikaṁ paricakṣate'— The penance performed with utmost faith without the expectation of reward is called Sāttvika.

सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत्।
क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमध्रुवम्॥ १८॥

satkāramānapūjārthaṁ tapo dambhena caiva yat
kriyate tadiha proktaṁ rājasaṁ calamadhruvam

The penance which is performed in order to gain respect, honour and reverence and for the sake of show and which yields an uncertain and perishable fruit is said to be Rājasa (passionate). 18

Comment:

'Satkāramānapūjārthaṁ tapaḥ kriyate'— The people of Rājasa temperament perform sacrifice in order to win respect, honour and reverence in the society. They expect others to esteem them as men of penance possessing self-control, truth and non-violence. They perform it so that the people may bow to them, wash their feet, offer flowers and garlands to them, wave lights before them and rub the forehead with the dust of their feet. During their life and after death they may take out a funeral procession with grandeur, make monument for them and offer flowers, sandal wood paste, water and clothes etc., to the monument.

'Dambhena caiva yat' —Though they have no faith in penances, yet they perform them for the sake of show. They sit cross legged, start counting the beads of a rosary and worshipping God by way of ostentation.

'Tadiha proktaṁ rājasaṁ calamadhruvam'—The fruit of Rājasa penance is said to be uncertain and perishable. It means that the penance which is performed in order to win respect, honour and reverence bears perishable fruit while the penance which is performed for ostentation may bear fruit or not and the ostentation may be a success or not.

The expression 'Iha proktam' means that a person gets the reward of the Rājasika penance here in the world. The Sāttvika people go to the higher regions-heaven etc., the Tāmasika descend to the lower regions-hells etc., while the Rājasika remain in the middle regions (Gītā 14/18). Therefore the Rājasika penance bears fruit here in the form of respect, honour and praise.

Can a Rājasika person perform penance of the body, mind and speech? He can worship the gods by expecting a reward. He can be gentle and can study the scriptures. But he can't observe celibacy and non-violence. He can't be placid and cheerful because projections and distractions of the mind disturb him because of his desire. Moreover how can his nature be pure when he performs the penance in order to win respect, honour and reverence? So a Rājasika person cannot perform the threefold penance thoroughly.

मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत्पीडया क्रियते तपः।
परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत्तामसमुदाहृतम्॥ १९॥

mūḍhagrāheṇātmano yatpīḍayā kriyate tapaḥ
parasyotsādanārthaṁ vā tattāmasamudāhṛtam

The penance which is performed with a foolish obstinacy, with self-torture or for causing injury to others is said to be Tāmasika (of the mode of ignorance). 19

Comment:

'Mūḍhagrāheṇātmano yatpīḍayā kriyate tapaḥ'— In a Tāmasika person delusion predominates. Such a person performs Tāmasika sacrifice out of delusion and obstinacy by torturing his own self i.e., body and mind etc.

'Parasyotsādanārtham vā'— Such a person performs penance in order to cause injury to others and to destroy them, even if he himself has to suffer. Such a person can perform penance by tolerating excessive heat and cold and observing fast also by his own sweet will.

'Tattāmasamudāhṛtam'— Such penance which is performed in order to cause injury to other is called Tāmasika.

[A Sāttvika person, who performs penance with utmost faith, having no desire for its fruit, deserves to be called a man. A Rājasika person who performs penance in order to win respect, honour and reverence does not deserve to be called a man because even birds and beasts like respect and honour etc., and they have no show or ostentation. The Tāmasika people are inferior even to birds and beasts because they cause injury to others by self torture while the birds and beasts don't cause injury to others, they suffer themselves only.]

Link:–Now the Lord in the next three verses mentions the threefold division of charity (gift).

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे ।
देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥ २० ॥

dātavyamiti yaddānaṁ dīyate'nupakāriṇe
deśe kāle ca pātre ca taddānaṁ sāttvikaṁ smṛtam

The gift, which is made to one from whom no return is expected, with the feeling that it is one's duty to give and which is given in proper place and time and to a worthy person, that gift is held to be Sāttvika (good). 20

Comment:

Here in this verse there are two kinds of gift- (i) The gift is made to one from whom no return is expected, regarding it as a duty. (ii) It is made in proper place and time and to a worthy person.

'Dātavyamiti yaddānaṁ dīyate'-nupakāriṇe deśe kāle ca pātre ca'—A person should offer a gift regarding it as his duty. He has to give the things to others because he has wrongly claimed them as his own. One, who has got possession over the things, has responsibility to give them to others. So he should make a gift without expecting any return at all here or hereafter.

Whom should it be given ? The answer comes that it should be given to those who have neither done good to him nor there is any possibility of return good in future. It does not mean that he should not give to those who have done him good. But it means that by doing so he should not regard it as a gift. He can't repay the debt of the persons who have done good to him by merely making a gift. So he must help them without regarding it as a gift (charity). The gift which is made with the expectation of some return is called Rājasika.

The expression 'Deśe kāle ca pātre ca' has a double meaning and both of them should be taken here in this context.

(i) The gift should be made in the place where it is needed i.e., it should be made in the place which is affected by drought, flood and famine etc. It should be made at the time when it is needed. It should be made of the thing which a needy person needs.

(ii) It should be made at the place of pilgrimage such as the Ganges, the Yamunā, the Godāvarī rivers or Kurukṣetra, Prayāga and Kāśī etc., and on sacred occasions such as the full moon and the last day of the dark fortnight Saṅkrānti (the passage of the sun from one zodiacal sign to another) etc., to a learned person who is well versed in the scripture or to a

pious and virtuous hermit or beggar or to any other deserving candidate.

'Taddānaṁ sāttvikaṁ smṛtam'—Such a gift is held to be Sāttvika. Actually all the things in the universe are not anyone's personal property, they belong to all the beings. So a thing should be given to the person who needs it because he has a claim on it. It should be given to him because it actually belongs to him. It means that we have assumed the things which are not ours as ours. So we should give them to him who needs them with the conviction that actually the things don't belong to us but they belong to him who needs them.

Thus the gift by making which, connection with the thing gifted with its reward and with the action of making the gift is totally renounced, is called 'Sāttvika'.

यत्तु प्रत्युपकारार्थं फलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः ।
दीयते च परिक्लिष्टं तद्दानं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥ २१ ॥

yattu pratyupakārārthaṁ phalamuddiśya vā punaḥ
dīyate ca parikliṣṭaṁ taddānaṁ rājasaṁ smṛtam

The gift which is made with the hope of a return or looking for a reward or in a grudging mood is said to be Rājasika (Passionate). 21

Comment:

'Yattu pratyupakārārtham'—The Rājasika gift is made with the hope of return. The Rājasika people think that if they make a gift to the family priest of their relatives, the relatives will also give gifts to the former's family priest. Thus their family priest will get money. Similarly they want to offer a gift to the priest who is an astrologer so that he may tell them the lucky moment of the marriages of their sons and daughters and also of their journey and business etc. Moreover they want make the gift to the priest who is a physician so that he may give them valuable medicines. Thus the gift which is made to expect a return is called 'Pratyupakārārtha'.

'Phalamuddiśya vā punaḥ'—This gift is made with the view that it will bring some unseen reward or heavenly pleasure. The Rājasika people make a gift at the place of pilgrimage (the Ganges, the Yamunā, Kurukṣetra etc., and on sacred occasions such as the last day of a dark fortnight (Amāvasyā), the full moon (Puṃimā) and eclipses etc., and to the deserving learned priest who has studied the Vedas. But because of the desire of reward it has been called Rājasika. So Lord Kṛṣṇa has not mentioned that it should be made at proper place and time and to a worthy person.

Here the term 'Punaḥ' (Then or again) has been used to denote that such a person first thinks of the man to whom he is indebted or from whom he expects a reward and then he makes a gift.

'Dīyate ca parikliṣṭam'—The Rājasika gift is made in a grudging and helpless mood under compulsion or force. Whatever they give, is given in a miserly manner, by being grieved at heart. They think that by giving more the habit of the donee will get spoiled while they will suffer loss. So it will be difficult for them to run their lives smoothly. Thus they make the gift in a higgling way.

'Taddānaṁ rājasaṁ smṛtam'—Such a gift is said to be Rājasika (Passionate).

अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते ।
असत्कृतमवज्ञातं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ २२ ॥

adeśakāle yaddānamapātrebhyaśca dīyate
asatkṛtamavajñātaṁ tattāmasamudāhṛtam

The gift which is made at a wrong place and time, to an unworthy person without respect or with contempt is declared to be Tāmasika (of the mode of ignorance). 22

Comment:

'Asatkṛtamavajñātam'— The Tāmasika gift is made without respect in a disdainful spirit. When the priest comes to receive the gift to the house of the Tāmasika people, they treat him with contempt and say that he did not come to their house when his presence was required. Another member of the family says that they should not be ensnared by such priests, they should give to the poor and the needy. They regard him as a dog who should be given a morsel of food otherwise he will bark. Such type of gift is called Tāmasa because in it the ordinance of the scriptures and the Brāhmaṇas (members of the priest class) are dishonoured.

'Adeśakāle yaddānam'— Out of delusion the Tāmasika people don't attach any importance to the proper place and time. They say that they have to make the gift, so it should be made at any place and time. Thus they offer the gift by dishonouring the ordinance of the scriptures because they instead of attaching importance to the ordinance of the scriptures attach importance to riches.

'Apātrebhyaśca dīyate'— The Tāmasika people give charity (gift) to an unworthy person arguing that the food given as a gift will satisfy the hunger of that person also and so it is also a virtuous action. Moreover they say that the people of the priest class have made such rules in order to earn their livelihood.

'Tattāmasamudāhṛtam'— Such a gift is declared to be Tāmasika.

Question:– In the Gītā it is mentioned that the Tāmasika people go downwards (i.e., into the wombs of insects, birds and beasts or into the infernal regions) (14/18) while in the Rāmacaritamānasa it is mentioned that charity (gift) given in anyway leads to the good. Thus the two statements seem to be contradictory.

Answer:—The Tāmasika people go downwards but this rule is not applicable for gift because when a person makes a gift, he has to renounce his affinity for the gift. It is because of this renunciation that even the Tāmasika charity is not conducive to the downward regions. So a gift has been eulogized in Śrīmadbhāgavata (12/3/18), in Manusmṛti (1/86) and also in Rāmacaritamānasa (7/103 b). The reason is that the person who has even little renunciation can't have a downfall.

Secondly in this Kali age when the hearts of the people have become very impure, a concession has been granted by the Lord that charity (gift) given in any form leads a man to the good. By making gifts a man develops this trait in his nature and that trait of making gifts will lead him to the good. So a gift should be made even without respect. So a saint has interpreted the expression 'Śraddhayā deyamaśraddhayādeyama' that a gift should be offered with reverence but it should be offered even if there is no reverence.

An Important Fact In Connection With Gifts

A gift of food, water, clothes and medicines should be made to the needy recipient without much thinking whether he is worthy or unworthy and whether place and time are auspicious or not. Offer food to a hungry man, water to a thirsty person, clothes to the naked and medicine to a patient. Similarly the act of freeing a man from fear and torture etc., is the gift of fearlessness which should be made. These gifts are to be made according to the need of the moment.

One point is to be kept in mind that an unworthy person should be given only so much of food and water that he may not die of starvation or thirst. If he is given more, he may again indulge in sins such as violence etc.

A devotee beholds His Lord in all beings. So

he worships his Lord by performing his duty instead of giving charity (gift) to a person (Gītā 18/46). It means that a devotee's all activities are connected with God.

Gifts and Their Fruits

In this chapter from the eleventh to the twenty-second verses the Sāttvika sacrifice, penance and gift are included in the divine nature while the Rājasika and Tāmasika ones are included in the demoniac nature.

The fruit of the Rājasika sacrifice, penance and gift can be divided into two parts – seen and unseen. The seen fruit can further be divided into two parts–immediate and future. The immediate fruit of the Rājasika food is that it satisfies hunger while its remote fruit is that it causes diseases. Similarly the unseen fruit can also be divided into two parts – here and hereafter. As the sacrifice which is performed for the sake of ostentation (17/12), the penance which is performed in order to win respect, honour and reverence (17/18) and the gift which is made with the hope of a return (17/21) bear fruit here.* But if they are performed in order to attain heaven, they bear fruit hereafter. But the Rājasika sacrifice which is performed for its fruit (17/12) and the gift which is made for a reward (17/21) can bear fruit here as well as hereafter. Out of them those who perform sacrifice in order to attain heaven (2/42-43; 9/20, 21) and those who perform sacrifice, penance and make gift for ostentation, respect, honour, reverence and reward follow the cycle of birth and death.† But the Tāmasika people who perform Tāmasika sacrifice and penance (17/13, 19) go downwards (14/18), fall into the foulest hell (16/16), into demoniacal wombs (16/19) and go down to the lowest state (16/20).

Those who go to heaven as the fruit of their sacrifice suffer from envy, jealousy and vanity there‡. Śatakratu, the king of the gods, is pained because of the atrocities of demons. Moreover, he has a burning sensation in his heart when he beholds anyone performing penance because he thinks that the person is doing so in order to usurp his throne. Now the question arises why he has to suffer this burning sensation when he is purged of those sins which are obstacles to heavenly enjoyment (9/20). The answer is that it is the fruit of his violence of animals which he commits while performing sacrifice.

Secondly all actions performed with an interested motive are tainted with some blemish as fire is clouded by smoke (18/48). When all actions are clouded by defects, there should be many more defects in the actions which are performed for their fruits. So in the scriptures it is mentioned that after performing a sacrifice the person should express penitence. But through penitence all the sins don't perish; their marks are left in the same way as dirt remains in the threads even when a cloth is washed with soap. So even the gods such as Indra has to suffer by facing unfavourable circumstances.

Actually all the defects perish only when a person discharges his duty without expecting any fruit and surrenders those actions to God. When he realizes that he is only God's, all his sins of millions of ages immediately disappear§. Lord Rāma in the Rāmacarita-

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* The future fruit of the seen and the fruit here of the unseen of the Rājasika mode though seem similar yet are different. As the food will bear fruit in the form of diseases, that is future fruit of the seen. But the sacrifice which is performed so that a son may be born bears fruit here in the form of the birth of a son by turning itself into fate. So it is the fruit here of the unseen.

† If the Rājasika people's ostentation is excessive (17/12, 18), it may be conducive to hells.

‡ In heaven also there are three categories – high, middle and low. Those who belong to the high category have vanity because they are superior to the other two types and they are envious of those who are of the same category.

Similarly those of middle class are proud as they consider them superior to those of the low class and have a burning sensation having seen the superior heavenly luxuries of those of the high class.

In the same way those of the low class are envious and jealous of the other two classes as well as of their own class and they are proud when they think of those who have not attained heaven.

Their residence (of the three categories) in heaven is not permanent because they have to return to the world of mortals when their merits are exhausted (Gītā 9/21) and they remain worried after thinking of it.

§ The evils such as envy and jealousy etc., are not the fruit of actions of the past but they develop because of the impurity of heart. When a man performs actions prescribed by the scriptures in order to reap their fruit, his heart is partially purified which leads him to the heaven and heavenly pleasures. But when a man has the only aim of God-Realization, his heart is thoroughly purified.

mānasa declares, "As soon as a being has an inclination for Me, his sins of millions of ages disappear."

Thirdly Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, "By what is a man impelled to commit sin, as if by force, against his will?" Lord Kṛṣṇa replied, "It is desire (craving), it is wrath, born of the mode of passion" (3/37). It means that it is desire born of the mode of passion, which forces a man to commit sins. So the Rājasika sacrifice which is performed with a desire for its fruit may involve sins.

The persons who perform Rājasika and Tāmasika sacrifice are of demoniac nature while the persons who perform Sāttvika sacrifice are of divine nature. But if a person is attached to the traits of the divine nature, this attachment binds him (Gītā 14/6).

Link:–In the fifth verse of the sixteenth chapter the divine virtues have been said to be conducive to liberation and the demoniac to bondage. Now the Lord starts the next topic. Those Sāttvika persons, who having possessed a divine nature perform sacrifice, penance and offer charity, may commit an error (by feelings, method and action). So what should be done to rectify that error?

ॐ तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः ।
ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा ॥ २३ ॥

oṁ tatsaditi nirdeśo brahmaṇastrividhaḥ smṛtaḥ
brāhmaṇāstena vedāśca yajñāśca vihitāḥ purā

"Aum (Oṁ), Tat and Sat" — This has been declared to be the triple designation of Brahma. By that were created formerly, the Brāhmaṇas, the Vedas and the sacrifices. 23

Comment:

'Oṁ tatsaditi nirdeśo brahmaṇastrividhaḥ smṛtaḥ'—'Oṁ, Tat and Sat–these are the three names of God (These three names will be explained in the next four verses).

'Brāhmaṇāstena vedāśca yajñāśca vihitāḥ purā'— God at the beginning of the creation created the Vedas, the Brāhmaṇas (persons of the priest class) and the sacrifices. The methods of performing sacrifices (which also include penance and charity) are explained in the Vedas; those who perform those sacrifices are Brahmaṇas and the actions that are performed are sacrifices.

If there is any defect in the performance of sacrifice and penance or offering of charity, how to rectify the flaw and render it perfect? Utter the name of God (Oṁ or Tat or Sat) and the flaw will be rectified and it will be rendered perfect. As a cook while kneading finds more water in the flour he adds some more flour to it and thus he sets it right. Similarly a person who performs virtuous actions such as sacrifice and penance etc., but finds any defect in those rites, he adds the name of the Lord and that name (utterance) corrects the defect.

तस्मादोमित्युदाहृत्य यज्ञदानतपःक्रियाः ।
प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम् ॥ २४ ॥

tasmādomityudāhṛtya yajñadānatapaḥkriyāḥ
pravartante vidhānoktāḥ satatam brahmavādinām

Therefore, with the utterance of 'Oṁ' are the acts of sacrifice, gift and penance, as enjoined in the scriptures, always undertaken by the followers of the Vedas. 24

Comment:

'Tasmādomityudāhṛtya yajña-dānatapaḥkriyāḥ pravartante vidhānoktāḥ satatam brahmavādinām'— The believers, who specially believe in the Vedas attach the greatest importance to the holy name Oṁ. They perform the sacred acts such as sacrifice, penance etc., which are sanctioned by the scriptures by uttering this name Oṁ. As a cow can't become pregnant without a bull, the recitation of the Vedic chants can't bear fruit without uttering the holy name Oṁ.

Why is the holy name Oṁ uttered first of all? The reason is that Oṁ, the Praṇava was revealed first of all. From Praṇava Gāyatrī (the Vedic metre) was revealed. From Gāyatrī the three Vedas Ṛk, Sāma and Yajuḥ were revealed. So 'Oṁ' is the root of Gāyatrī and the Vedas. Therefore, all the Vedic rites are performed by uttering the holy name Oṁ.

तदित्यनभिसंधाय फलं यज्ञतपःक्रियाः ।
दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः ॥ २५ ॥

tadityanabhisaṁdhāya phalaṁ yajñatapaḥkriyāḥ
dānakriyāśca vividhāḥ kriyante mokṣakāṅkṣibhiḥ

With the utterance of the word 'Tat' the acts of sacrifice and penance and the various acts of gifts are performed by the seekers of salvation, without aiming at the rewards. 25

Comment:

'Tadityanabhisaṁdhāya phalaṁ yajñatapaḥkriyāḥ dānakriyāśca vividhāḥ kriyante mokṣakāṅkṣibhiḥ'— All the actions such as sacrifice, penance and gifts etc., should be performed in order to please God without expecting any reward whatsoever. Every action has a beginning and an end. Similarly there is union and disunion of its fruit. But the Lord ever remains the same without undergoing any kind of change. So the expression 'Tat' denotes that the Lord ever remains the same while the expression 'Anabhisaṁdhāya phalam' denotes that all actions and their fruits are perishable . So a striver should ever remember the everlasting Lord and he should never aim at the perishable rewards.

We can't behold the Lord Who ever pervades everywhere because we assume the kaleidoscopic and perishable world as real. So a striver by having the aim of God-Realization and renouncing the feeling of 'I'ness and 'Mineness' should perform the acts of sacrifice, penance and gift by regarding them as His own with the power given by Him for His sake only. This is the real achievement of human life. So a striver has to realize God Who is known as 'Tat' and he has to renounce affinity for the world which seems real.

The devotees of the Lord uttering other names of the Lord such as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva and Śiva etc., begin their acts. All these names also denote the term 'Tat'.

The seekers of salvation perform various acts of sacrifice, penance, gift, pilgrimage, meditation, trance, chanting and study of the scriptures etc., for the Lord's sake by obeying Him in order to please Him. The reasons is that all the bodies, organs, minds, hearts, souls etc., and also we belong to the Lord. Thus the so-called, our property and riches also belong to Him. So we belong to God and God is ours, with this conviction all the actions should be performed in order to please Him only.

Link:–Having explained the two names 'Aum' (Oṁ) and 'Tat' of the Lord in the twenty-fourth verse and the twenty-fifth verse respectively, now He explains the third name of God 'Sat' in the next two verses in five different senses.

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते ।
प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते ॥ २६ ॥

sadbhāve sādhubhāve ca sadityetatprayujyate
praśaste karmaṇi tathā sacchabdaḥ pārtha yujyate

The word 'Sat' is used in the sense of reality and goodness; and so also, O Pārtha (Arjuna) the word 'Sat' is used in the sense of a praiseworthy act. 26

Comment:

'Sadbhāve'— The existence of God is known 'Sadbhāva'. The Lord Who is attributeless and is endowed with attributes, Who is formless and also with form, and His incarnations such as Viṣṇu, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, Śakti (Durgā), Gaṇeśa and Sun-god—all are included with in 'Sadbhāva'. Thus the Lord Who ever exists everywhere and Whose names, forms and sports are innumerable, is 'Sadbhāva' (Reality).

'Sādhubhāve'— The noble dispositions of the mind such as compassion and forgiveness etc., which have been described in various spiritual disciplines of different sects and which are conducive to God-Realization are included in 'Sādhubhāve' (Goodness).

'Sadityetatprayujyate'—The term 'Sat' is used in the sense of reality and goodness. It means that the term 'Sat' is used for the Lord Who is permanent and unchanging and also for the divine traits such as truth, forgiveness, generosity and renunciation etc., which are conducive to God-Realization.

'Praśaste karmaṇi tathā sacchabdaḥ pārtha yujyate'—All the noble deeds which are conducive to God-Realization are said to be praiseworthy. Similarly all the other rites such as of sacred thread, marriage etc., as well as charity and construction of wells, temples, hospitals etc., which are sanctioned by the scripture are included in 'Praśaste karmaṇi' (Praiseworthy acts). The word 'Sat' is used in the sense of all these praiseworthy acts.

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।
कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥ २७ ॥

yajñe tapasi dāne ca sthitiḥ saditi cocyate
karma caiva tadarthīyaṁ sadityevābhidhīyate

Steadfastness in sacrifice, penance and gift is also called 'Sat' and so also any action for the sake of the Supreme is called 'Sat'. 27

Comment:

'Yajñe tapasi dāne ca sthitiḥ saditi cocyate'— Steadfastness (faith) in praiseworthy actions such as sacrifice, penance and gift etc., is called 'Sat'. So the steadfastness in Sāttvika sacrifice, Sāttvika penance and Sāttvika gift along with promptness in their performance is called 'Sat Niṣṭhā' (Real faith).

The term 'Ca' (And) denotes that besides the steadfastness as mentioned above, faith in selfless service, hospitality, obedience, truth, chastity, pilgrimage and performance of one's duty according to one's caste, creed and social order etc., is known as real faith,

'Karma caiva tadarthīyaṁ sadityevābhidhīyate'—Besides these

noble deeds there are two kinds of acts—the mundane and the spiritual.

(1) All the acts of earning one's livelihood according to one's caste and social order such as teaching, business and farming etc., and also eating, drinking, sitting standing, walking, awaking and sleeping etc., are mundane.

(2) Meditation, adoration, utterance of the Lord's name, loud chanting and listening to the glories of the Lord and the saints etc., are spiritual acts.

If both of the activities are performed with reverence and faith without expecting any reward by giving up one's comfort, only for the Lord's sake, they become 'Sat' (Real). Such acts having affinity with God Who is Real, are included in the divine nature which leads to salvation.

If a pot shred is put into fire, the fire converts it into its own form. It is the speciality of fire that the pot shred takes the form of fire. Similarly the action, which is performed for God becomes Godly i.e., that action leads to God-Realization. In fact the action itself is insignificant but because of its performance for God, it has gained significance.

The Lord by the term 'Tadarthīyam' means to say that all the spiritual practice of a striver, who wants only God-Realization or salvation without having any craving for the highest heavenly enjoyments, becomes 'Sat'. In this connection the Lord mentions that that none who works for self-redemption or God-Realization meets with an evil destiny (Gītā 6/40). Not only this but He also declares—the seeker of the Yoga of equanimity also transcends the fruit of actions performed with some motive as laid down in the Vedas (Gītā 6/44). The reason is that the actions perish by bearing fruit but the spiritual practice (act) done for the sake of the Lord does not perish, rather it becomes 'Sat' (Real).

Link:–In the preceding verse the Lord declared that the acts performed for the Lord's sake become 'Sat' (Real). Now the question arises what is the result of the acts which are not performed for the Lord's sake (i.e., which are performed without faith in Him).

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत्।
असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह॥ २८॥

aśraddhayā hutaṁ dattaṁ tapastaptaṁ kṛtaṁ ca yat
asadityucyate pārtha na ca tatpretya no iha

Whatever oblation is offered, whatever charity (gift) is given, whatever penance is performed and whatsoever is done without faith, it is called 'Asat', O Arjuna, it is of no avail here or hereafter. 28

Comment:

'Aśraddhayā hutaṁ dattaṁ tapas-taptaṁ kṛtaṁ ca yat'—If acts of sacrifice, penance and gifts, which are sanctioned by the scriptures are, performed without faith, they are called 'Asat'. The demoniac people don't believe in the next world (hereafter), rebirth, righteousness and God. They act against the scriptures. The sacrifice and penances performed by them are against the ordinance of the scriptures.

Now the question arises why they perform sacrifices and penance when they have no faith in them. The answer is that they perform them in order to win praise, regard and honour.

'Asadityucyate pārtha na ca tat-pretya no iha'— An action such as sacrifice etc., which is performed without faith is called 'Asat'. It is useless in this life as well as in the next. If the actions are performed expecting a reward, with faith according to the ordinance of the scriptures, they bear fruit here in the form of riches, prosperity, obedient sons and chaste wife etc., and hereafter in the form of the attainment of heaven etc. If they are

performed without expecting any reward with faith and in accordance with the scriptures, they having purified the heart, lead to God-Realization. But if they are performed without faith, they are of no avail either in this world or in the next world.

Now a question arises that sinful acts such as injustice, tyranny, fraud, falsehood and forgery etc., should not bear any fruit because they are performed without faith and the person does not expect any reward. The answer is that they bear fruit because whatever action is performed with attachment bears fruit even though the doer (agent) does not want it. So the people of demoniac nature go to the demoniac wombs and to hells.

Any simple and insignificant act, if it is performed without expecting any reward for the Lord's sake, becomes 'Sat' and leads to God-Realization. But if an important act such as sacrifice and penance is performed with faith and according to the ordinance of the scriptures for expecting its reward, it perishes by bearing fruit and does not lead to God-Realization. If an act is performed without faith it becomes 'Asat' i.e., it does not bear any fruit here or hereafter. It means that in God-Realization it is faith (feelings), not an act, which has predominance.

Sadbhāva (The existence of God), Sādhubhāva (The noble dispositions of the mind), noble deeds, steadfastness in 'Sat' and actions for the sake of the Supreme – these five are called 'Sat' as they are conducive to God-Realization.

Why do acts without faith become 'Asat'? The Lord by His grace has described virtuous actions in the scriptures so that a man by performing them may atttain God-Realization. But those actions turn to be 'Asat' when they are performed without faith. Their faithlessness should conduce the people to hells etc., but because the actions performed by them are good (virtuous), so their actions are of no avail, i.e., they don't bear any fruit and this is punishment for such people.

It is proper on the part of a man that he should perform acts of sacrifice, penance, gift and pilgrimage etc., which are sanctioned by the scriptures, with faith, having no expectation for fruit. The Lord by His special grace has bestowed upon us this human body so that we may perform virtuous actions with faith for the Lord's sake. Those actions will prove to be useful for the welfare of all beings here as well as hereafter. So such noble actions should be performed with faith in order to please God.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुन-संवादे श्रद्धात्रयविभागयोगो नाम सप्तदशोऽध्यायः ॥ १७ ॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde śraddhātrayavibhāgayogo nāma saptadaśo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ, Tat, Sat the names of the Lord, in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavadgītā, the knowledge of Brahma, the supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, this is the seventeenth discourse designated :

"The Yoga of Division of the Threefold faith."

In this chapter faith has been divided into three kinds–Sāttvika (Good), Rājasika (Passionate) and Tāmasika (Ignorant or dull). One, who knows the threefold faith in the right perspective, will possess the good faith and renounce the passionate and the dull ones. As soon as he renounces the two (because of his good faith), he realizes his real and eternal affinity with God which is natural. So the discourse has been designated : "The Yoga of Division of the Threefold faith."

Words, letters and Uvāca (said) in the Seventeenth Chapter

(1) In this chapter in **'Atha saptadaśo'dh-**

yāyaḥ' there are there words, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are four words, in verses there are three hundred and thirty-eight words and there are thirteen concluding words. Thus the total number of words is three hundred and fifty-eight.

(2) In this chapter in **'Atha saptadaśo'-dhyāyaḥ'** there are eight letters, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are thirteen letters, in the verses there are eight hundred and ninety-six letters and there are fifty-one concluding letters. Thus the total number of letters is nine hundred and sixty-eight.

Each of the verses in the chapter consists of thirty-two letters.

(3) In this chapter the term **'Uvāca'** (said) has been used two times — **'Arjuna Uvāca'** and **'Śrībhagavānuvāca'.**

Metres Used in the Seventeenth Chapter

Out of the twenty-eight verses of this chapter in the first quarter of the third verse 'ma-gaṇa' and in its third quarter 'bha-gaṇa' being used there is **'saṁkīrṇa-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarters of the tenth and twelfth verses and in the third quarters of the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'na-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarters of sixteenth and seventeenth verses 'ma-gaṇa' being used there is **'ma-vipulā'** metre; in the third quarter of the eleventh verse 'bha-gaṇa' being used there is **'bha-vipulā'** metre; and in the first quarter of the nineteenth verse 'ra-gaṇa' being used there is **'ra-vipulā'** metre. The remaining nineteen verses are possessed of the characteristics of right **'pathyāvaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

Śrī Hariḥ

EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER

Introduction

The Lord in the thirty-ninth verse of the second chapter described Sāṅkhyayoga (The Discipline of Knowledge) and Karmayoga (The Discipline of Action). These two disciplines were also mentioned in the third verse of the third chapter. Arjuna wanted to know these two paths (Disciplines). But as Lord Kṛṣṇa could not get an opportunity to explain the divine nature and the demoniac nature from the seventh chapter to the fifteenth chapter, similarly Arjuna could not express his curiosity from the third chapter to the seventeenth chapter.

Having mentioned the two paths in the third verse of the third chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa in the first verse of the fourth chapter explained that He taught the imperishable Yoga to the sun-god. Arjuna asked Him how he could believe that He taught the Yoga to the sun-god because His birth was later while the birth of the sun-god was earlier. The Lord in response to his question talked of His divine births (incarnations) and divine actions. In the thirty-fourth verse of the fourth chapter He ordered him to gain that knowledge from the men of wisdom by prostration, by question and by service to them. Again in the forty-second verse of the fourth chapter He ordered him to establish himself in Yoga viz., Karmayoga (in the form of even-mindedness). So Arjuna at the beginning of the fifth chapter asked Lord Kṛṣṇa which of the two, the path of knowledge or the path of action (Karmayoga) was decidedly better for him. The Lord answered his question in the fifth chapter and started the sixth chapter of his own accord.

In the thirty-third and the thirty-fourth verses of the sixth chapter Arjuna put a question on the restlessness (fickleness) of mind. The Lord answered his question in brief. Arjuna from the thirty-seventh to the thirty-ninth verses put the question, "What fate does the striver whose mind wanders away from Yoga (at the time of death) failing to attain perfection in Yoga, meet with?" The Lord answered the question in the sixth chapter. In the last verse of the sixth chapter the Lord declared his devotee the most devout among all the Yogīs. The Lord started the same topic in the seventh chapter where he described devotion in particular.

Lord Kṛṣṇa at the end of the seventh chapter while describing His entire form used the terms Brahma and Adhyātma etc. So at the beginning of the eighth chapter Arjuna put seven questions for the clarification of those terms. The Lord answered the first six questions in brief while He explained the seventh question– how He is to be realized at the time of death, in detail. Then He described the topic which was left in the seventh chapter, in the ninth chapter and upto the eleventh verse of the tenth chapter. Arjuna was very much pleased when he heard in the ninth, tenth and eleventh verses of the tenth chapter, of the devotees and the Lord's compassion to them. So Arjuna from the twelfth to the eighteenth verses praised Him and prayed to Him to tell him in detail His power of Yoga and His glories. Having described His important glories at the end of the tenth chapter He declares, "What need is there, O Arjuna, for the detailed knowledge? I stand supporting the whole universe with a single fragment of Myself." Hearing these words Arjuna prayed to Him to reveal to him His cosmic form. Having revealed His cosmic form, the Lord declared that by unswerving devotion He can be seen and known and even entered into.

At the end of the eleventh chapter the Lord explained the merits of devotion and before that also He explained the merits of the worship of His absolute aspect (4/34-37; 5/13-26; 6/24-28 and 8/11-13). So Arjuna at the beginning of the twelfth chapter asked, "The devotees who with their minds constantly fixed in You adore You and again those who

worship the Imperishable and the Unmanifested—of these two who are better versed in Yoga ?" In response to his question Lord Kṛṣṇa explained devotion and devotees in the twelfth chapter while worship of the Imperishable and the Unmanifested in the thirteenth and the fourteenth chapters. In the twenty-first verse of the fourteenth chapter Arjuna asked, "What are the marks of him who has transcended the three modes of nature? What is his conduct and how does he get beyond the three modes ?" So the Lord explained the marks and conduct of such a transcendental person and also explained exclusive devotion as the means to attain that state. The Lord started the fifteenth chapter in connection with His exclusive devotion. At the end of the chapter He declared that a person who knows Him as the Supreme Person worships Him with his whole being (heart or spirit). He means to say that the persons of divine nature worship Him. It connotes that the persons of demoniac nature don't worship Him. Before this chapter also in the fifteenth verse of the seventh chapter and in the twelfth verse of the ninth chapter the demoniac nature, while in the thirteenth verse of the ninth chapter the divine nature have been described in brief. So the Lord started the sixteenth chapter in order to explain the divine nature and the demoniac nature.

Arjuna put the question at the beginning of the seventeenth chapter on faith which was in connection with the Lord's declaration which he made in the last but one verse of the sixteenth chapter. The Lord answered his question by describing the faith of three kinds in the seventeenth chapter. Now Arjuna expresses his desire to know the two paths of knowledge and of action which were mentioned by Him in the third verse of the third chapter.

अर्जुन उवाच

संन्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम्।
त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन ॥ १ ॥

arjuna uvāca

saṁnyāsasya mahābāho tattvamicchāmi veditum
*tyāgasya ca hṛṣīkeśa pṛthakkeśiniṣūdana **

---

* On the basis of what Lord Kṛṣṇa has answered to Arjuna's curiosity, his other curiosities can be guessed. They are as follows—

(a) Saṁnyāsasya mahābāho tattvamicchāmi veditum:—

(1) What is Saṁnyāsa ?

Freedom from egoistic notion (notion of doership) and untaintedness of understanding (18/17).

(2) What are the characteristics (marks) of a Saṁnyāsī ? He should be free from attachment, non-egoistic, full of resolution and zeal and unaffected by success or failure (18/26).

(3) What (spiritual) discipline should a Saṁnyāsī follow ?

He should be endowed with a pure intellect, he should resort to dispassion, dwell in solitude, restrain senses, body, speech and mind and so on (18/51-53).

(4) How should he conduct himself?

He should perform action without the sense of doership and being free from attachment and aversion (18/23).

(5) How does he see beings?

He sees the one Imperishable Being (God) in all beings, undivided in the divided (18/20).

(6) What is its fruit?

To enter into the Supreme (18/55).

(b) Tyāgasya ca hṛṣīkeśa pṛthakkeśiniṣūdana—

(i) What is relinquishment?

Performance of duty by relinquishing attachment to actions and their fruit (18/6).

Arjuna said :

O Mighty-armed, O Inner-controller of all, O Slayer of Keśi, I desire to know severally the true nature of renunciation (Saṁnyāsa) (Sāṅkhyayoga) and of Tyāga (Karmayoga). 1

Comment:

'Saṁnyāsasya mahābāho tattvamicchāmi veditum tyāgasya ca hṛṣīkeśa pṛthakkeśiniṣūdana'— While addressing Lord Kṛṣṇa as 'Mahābāho' Arjuna means to convey that being omniscient, He is able to explain all the topics. So He should satisfy his curiosity in such a manner that he may understand the topic easily.

By addressing Him as 'Hṛṣīkeśa' Arjuna means to say that He is the Lord of senses and inner-controller of all beings. So He should explain to him everything in connection with the nature of 'Saṁnyāsa' and 'Tyāga' even if he does not demand.

By using the term 'Keśiniṣūdana' he means to say that as He frees His devotees from all troubles and problems, He should also remove his doubts.

Generally a curiosity is expressed with two purposes. (i) To translate it into practice (ii) To understand the principle. Those who want to understand the principle can become learned by possessing bookish knowledge and can even write books but they can't attain salvation. But those, who after understanding the principle translate it into practice, can attain salvation.*

Arjuna also expressed the curiosity so that having known the principle he may translate it into practice.

The term 'Sāṅkhya' used in the expression 'Eṣā te'bhihitā sāṅkhye' (Gītā 2/39) has been termed 'Saṁnyāsa' here. The Lord regards the terms 'Sāṅkhya' and 'Saṁnyāsa' as synonyms—as in the second verse of the fifth chapter He uses the term 'Saṁnyāsaḥ', in the fourth and the fifth verses the term 'Sāṅkhya' while in the sixth verse again 'Saṁnyāsa'. Therefore here also 'Sāṅkhya' has been termed 'Saṁnyāsa'.

Similarly the term 'Yoga' used in the expression 'Buddhiryoge tvimāṁ śṛṇu' (Gītā 2/39) stands for the term 'Tyāga' used here. The Lord regards the terms 'Yoga' and 'Tyāga' as synonyms as — 'Saṅgaṁ tyaktvā' in the forty-eighth verse of the second chapter and in the fifty-first verse of the same chapter 'Phalaṁ tyaktvā', in the third verse of the third chapter 'Karmayogena yoginām', in the twentieth verse of the fourth chapter 'Tyaktvā karmaphalāsaṅgam', in the fourth verse of the fifth chapter 'Yogau', in the fifth verse 'Tadyogairapi gamyate', in the eleventh verse 'Saṅgaṁ tyaktvā', and in the twelfth verse 'Karmaphalaṁ tyaktvā', and in the twelfth verse of the twelfth chapter 'Tyāgāt'. All these expression have been used for 'Karmayoga'. Therefore here Arjuna has used the term 'Tyāga' for 'Yoga' i.e., the Discipline of Action.

In fact Saṁnyāsa, consists in renouncing one's affinity with nature through discrimination while 'Tyāga' consists in giving up attachment to actions and their fruits. He, who does not get attached to actions and their fruits, is said to have attained to Yoga (6/4).

(ii) What should a relinquisher relinquish? i.e., his characteristic :—
He should relinquish the fruit of action (18/11).

(iii) How should he perform his duty ? or what discipline should he follow :—
He should perform his duty by renouncing attachment and fruit (18/9).

(iv) How should he conduct himself?
Neither aversion to disagreeable action nor attachment to agreeable action (18/10 first half).

(v) How should he perform his duty ?
He should perform it merely because it should be performed (18/9).

(vi) What is its fruit?
To get established in God (18/10-2nd half).

* Having known the unreal as unreal a man can't attain the real so long as he does not fix 'Realization of the real' as the top most aim of his life.

Link:–In response to Arjuna's curiosity, the Lord in the next two verses cites the four different views of other thinkers on the subject of Saṁnyāsa and Tyāga.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं संन्यासं कवयो विदुः ।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥ २ ॥
त्याज्यं दोषवदित्येके कर्म प्राहुर्मनीषिणः ।
यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यमिति चापरे ॥ ३ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

kāmyānāṁ karmaṇāṁ nyāsaṁ saṁnyāsaṁ kavayo viduḥ
sarvakarmaphalatyāgaṁ prāhustyāgaṁ vicakṣaṇāḥ
tyājyaṁ doṣavadityeke karma prāhurmanīṣiṇaḥ
yajñadānatapaḥkarma na tyājyamiti cāpare

The Blessed Lord said:

The wise understand by 'renunciation' (Saṁnyāsa) the giving up of all actions prompted by desire; the learned declare the abandonment of the fruits of all actions as relinquishment (Tyāga). Some philosophers declare that actions should be given up as an evil, while others say that acts of sacrifice, gift and penance are not to be given up. 2-3

Comment:

These are the four views of the men of wisdom—

(1) 'Kāmyānāṁ karmaṇāṁ nyāsaṁ saṁnyāsaṁ kavayo viduḥ'—Some men of wisdom declare that renunciation means the giving up of all actions prompted by desire to gain the favourable and to get rid of the unfavourable.

(2) 'Sarvakarmaphalatyāgaṁ prāhustyāgaṁ vicakṣaṇāḥ'—Some learned people declare that abandonment of the fruits of all actions is relinquishment i.e., 'Tyāga' (relinquishment) consists in performing actions without the desire for fruits.

(3) 'Tyājyaṁ doṣavadityeke karma prāhurmanīṣiṇaḥ' —Some men of wisdom declare that all actions should be given up as an evil.*

(4) 'Yajñadānatapaḥkarma na tyājyamiti cāpare'—Some philosophers declare that other actions may be given up but sacrifice, gift and penance are not to be given up.

The above mentioned four views can be divided into two parts—the first and the third divisions are in connection with 'Saṁnyāsa' (Saṅkhyayoga) while the second and the fourth divisions are in connection with 'Tyāga' (Karmayoga). But in these two similar divisions also there is a little difference. In the first division the actions prompted by desire are to be given up while in the third division all the actions are to be given up. Similarly according to the second opinion there is abandonment of the fruit of actions while according to the fourth one other actions except sacrifice, gift and penance are to be abandoned.

How is the Lord's view superior to those of other thinkers is discussed as follows:—

(1) 'Kāmyānāṁ karmaṇāṁ nyāsaṁ saṁnyāsaṁ'—Here all actions

* According to the Saṁskṛta grammar the term 'Doṣavat' has a double meaning—all actions should be given up as an evil and evil actions should be given up. But here according to the men of wisdom the former meaning is appropriate.

prompted by desire are given up*, yet there remain obligatory actions of daily routine and also those that are performed on special occasions or places of pilgrimage etc. Therefore this view is not perfect because in it neither the renunciation of doership has been mentioned nor it has been mentioned that one gets established in the self. But in the Lord's view both these factors are involved. In the seventeenth verse of this chapter there is mention of the renouncement of doership when the Lord declares, "He who is free from the egoistic notion and whose intelligence is not tainted." Similarly he remains established in the self, has been explained when He declares, "He may kill all these people, he does not kill nor is he bound."

(2) 'Tyājyaṁ doṣavadityeke'—In this view of the men of wisdom it is said that all actions should be given up as an evil. But all actions can't be renounced (Gītā 3/5) and even the body can't be maintained without action (Gītā 3/8). So the Lord has called this sort of renunciation of one's duty as Rājasika (passionate) (18/7-8).

(3) 'Sarvakarmaphalatyāgam'— In this first view of relinquishment there is relinquishment of fruit i.e., relinquishment of desire†. Relinquishment of attachment can't be included in it because by doing so the view of the men of wisdom and the view of the Lord become one. The Lord declares "Duties must be performed relinquishing attachment and fruit" (Gītā 18/6).

(4) 'Yajñadānatapaḥkarma na tyājyam'—Sacrifice, gift and penance are not to be given up. But besides these three there is no mention of other actions which one performs according to one's caste and social order etc., whether they should be performed or not. So this view is imperfect. According to the view of the Lord all duties must be peformed relinquishing attachment and fruit (18/5-6).

Link:–Having cited the four views of the men of wisdom on the subject of Saṁnyāsa and Tyāga in the preceding two verses, the Lord now in the next three verses declares the final truth on relinquishment (Tyāga).

निश्चयं शृणु मे तत्र त्यागे भरतसत्तम ।
त्यागो हि पुरुषव्याघ्र त्रिविधः संप्रकीर्तितः ॥ ४ ॥

niścayaṁ śṛṇu me tatra tyāge bharatasattama
tyāgo hi puruṣavyāghra trividhaḥ saṁprakīrtitaḥ

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* Actions are divided into five kinds—
(1) 'Nityakarma'— The daily activities such as the prayer in the morning, noon and evening known as 'Sandhyā' and recitation of 'Gāyatrī mantra' (the sacred Vedic hymn) etc.
(2) 'Naimittika karma'—The actions which are performed on account of some place of pilgrimage or special occasions etc., are called 'Naimittika karma'. The actions sanctioned by the scriptures at the places of pilgrimage such as Prayāga, Naimiṣāraṇya and Puṣkara etc., and on occasions such as on the days of eclipses, the full moon and darkest fortnight (Amāvasyā) and the eleventh day of every fortnight (Ekādaśī) as well as on the birthday and day of marriage etc., are included in this category.
(3) 'Kāmya karma'—The religious rites performed in order to gain praise, honour, son, riches, fame etc., and to get rid of diseases, poverty and other undesirable circumstances etc., are known as 'Kāmya karma'.
(4) 'Prāyaścitta karma'— The actions which are performed in order to get rid of the sins of the present or the past are called actions of repentance i.e,, 'Prāyaścitta karma'.
(5) Necessary (obligatory) actions—The profession such as farming, business, service etc., as well as the actions as eating, drinking, sleeping, awaking etc., are regarded as necessary (obligatory) actions of daily routine.

† Where there is mention of the relinquishment of fruit, there it should be regarded as the relinquishment of the desire for fruit because the fruit can't be relinquished. Every action bears some fruit or the other. When a farmer farms a field, it will bear fruit either desirable or undesirable. Similarly a businessman may gain or lose as the fruit of business. Thus success or failure is the fruit of action. But when a man relinquishes desire, his affinity for fruit is automatically renounced (Gītā 18/12). Therefore, the Lord has advised to remain even-minded in success and failure and this even-mindedness is called 'Yoga' (Gītā 2/48). This even-mindedness means that the person should not be attached to the fruits of actions.

Hear from Me the conclusion or the final truth about relinquishment, O best of the Bharatas (Arjuna); relinquishment, O best of men, has been declared as threefold *. 4

Comment:

'Niścayaṁ śṛṇu me tatra tyāge bharatasattama'—Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to hear from Him His view on relinquishment first.

'Tyago hi puruṣavyāghra trividhaḥ samprakīrtitaḥ'—The Lord addressing Arjuna as the best of men says that relinquishment has been declared of three kinds—Sāttvika (Good), Rājasika (Passionate) and Tāmasika (Ignorant or Dull). According to the Lord the Sāttvika relinquishment is the real relinquishment. But in order to show the superiority of Sāttvika relinquishment he has mentioned the passionate and the ignorant forms of relinquishment also.

By discussing the threefold relinquishment He wants to convey that a striver should adopt only Sāttvika relinquishment by giving up the Rājasika and the Tāmasika ones.

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत्।
यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम्॥ ५॥

yajñadānatapaḥkarma na tyājyaṁ kāryameva tat
yajño dānaṁ tapaścaiva pāvanāni manīṣiṇām

Acts of sacrifice, gift and penance are not to be relinquished but should be performed; for sacrifice, gift and penance are purifiers of the wise. 5

Comment:

'Yajñadānatapaḥkarma na tyājyaṁ kāryameva tat'—Here the Lord has supported the view of the men of wisdom (18/3). He does not criticize any view in harsh words. He takes the right view of other thinkers and adds his own view to it. Here He supports the view of other thinkers that sacrifice, gift and penance should not be abandoned. He adds His own view that they should be performed because they are purifiers of the wise.

'Yajño dānaṁ tapaścaiva pāvanāni manīṣiṇām'—Here the term 'Caiva' denotes that besides the acts of sacrifice, gift and penance, other acts of daily routine in connection with the body and occupation etc., should also be performed because they are purifiers of the wise. The men, who endowed with equanimity renounce the fruit of action, are wise (Gītā 2/51). Even such men of wisdom are purified by acts of sacrifice, gift and penance etc. But the same acts lead those to bondage whose senses are not under control and who perform these acts in order to enjoy pleasures.

In this verse the Lord in the first half has used the compound expression 'Yajñadānatapaḥkarma' while in the second half He has given them as separate terms 'Yajño dānam tapaḥ.' Why ? He wants to convey in the first half that acts of sacrifice, gift and penance should be surely performed while in the second half He means to say that each of these acts is purifier of the wise.

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च।
कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम्॥ ६॥

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* The Lord has explained the final truth about relinquishment in the fifth and the sixth verses while the threefold relinquishment has been explained from the seventh to the ninth verses.

As the Lord discriminates between the soul (the real) and the body (the unreal) first of all (2/11-30) because the discrimination is very necessary for a Yogī, similarly here he begins the topic of relinquishment of the desire of fruit and attachment to action regarding it as indispensable for Yogīs.

etānyapi tu karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā phalāni ca
kartavyānīti me pārtha niścitaṁ matamuttamam

But even these actions should be performed, giving up attachment and desire for fruits. This, O Pārtha (Arjuna), is My decided and best view. 6

Comment:

'Etānyapi tu karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā phalāni ca kartavyānīti me pārtha niścitaṁ matamuttamam'— Here the term 'Etāni' denotes the acts of sacrifice, gift and penance mentioned in the preceding verse while the term 'Api' denotes other acts in connection with one's occupation such as business and farming etc., bodily acts such as eating, drinking, walking, sitting and sleeping—waking etc., in accordance with the scriptural injunctions and also other necessary acts of daily routine. If the actions are performed without having any desire and attachment, for the welfare of others the flow of actions is towards the world viz., actions are not for one's own self-interest at all, they are totally for the good of others. Thus we get united with God. But if they are performed with attachment and desire for fruit etc., they lead to bondage.

In the Gītā in certain contexts there is mention of the relinquishment of attachment while in others the Lord talks of the relinquishment of the fruit of actions. Here in this verse both are mentioned together. It means that where there is a mention of the one, the other should also be included. So a striver should neither be attached to actions nor to the fruit of actions. By doing so his attachment to the mind, intellect, senses and body and other possessions is shaken off (Gītā 5/11).

Attachment is subtle while desire for fruit of action is gross. The attachment of the sentient soul to the insentient and perishable world leads the soul to its birth in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21). As soon as this attachment is relinquished, a striver realizes his natural detachment.

Philosophers differ in their views about the universe. Some of them regard it as unreal like a dream, others hold it as kaleidoscopic like the body, while some others believe in its existence like water which always remains in the form of snow, cloud, vapour etc., but never perishes. Thus they hold different views. But they all agree that the perishable Matter has no affinity with the imperishable self. So a striver instead of being entangled in the discussions and arguments whether Matter is real or unreal or beyond the real and the unreal etc., should give up his affinity with the universe, the evolute of Matter. In fact the universe including this body is ever undergoing a change while the soul ever remains the same without any sort of modification. A striver has to realize this fact.

Whatever circumstances we are placed in, are the fruits of the actions performed in the past; and the actions we are performing now will bear fruit in future. So a striver should neither be attached to the persons and things he possesses nor have a desire for what he expects to receive in future. He should not have any desire for fruits*.

Why should the desire for fruits of actions be given up? The reason is that the actions have a beginning and an end and so is their fruit. So the desire and attachment for the fruit should be given up. Actually there is no attachment in the self, it is merely assumed.

Actually we can't give up what is ours and also can't give up what is not ours. We can't give up the self, as fire can't give up heat and light. We also can't give up the things which are lying in this world. We can give up the things which are not ours but we have assumed them as ours. We have assumed the Matter and its evolute, the body as ours. So we have to give up this assumption.

A man should discharge his duty very carefully and promptly, by giving up attachment and desire for fruits, according to

* The term 'Phalāni' has been used in plural number because such people expect the fruit in the form of comforts, luxuries, praise, honour and fame etc., here and in heaven hereafter. According to the opinion of the Lord, desire for all these fruits should be renounced.

the ordinance of the scriptures whether it is significant or insignificant. The reason is that when we are not concerned with its fruit, no question arises whether the action is trivial or significant and whether it bears meagre or rich fruit. An action appears to be superior or inferior due to desire for fruit, while in Karmayoga the desire for fruit is to be renounced. A follower of the Discipline of Action performs actions in order to get rid of attachment. In the Gītā it is mentioned, "Action is said to be the means of the sage who wishes to attain to Yoga (in the form of equanimity)" (Gītā 6/3), "Not by non-performance of actions does a man attain freedom from action" (Gītā 3/4). When he performs an action for himself, he gets attached to it. So a striver following the path of action performs actions for the welfare of others. With his physical body he does good to others, with his subtle body he thinks of the welfare of others and with the causal body his trance is also meant for the welfare of others. By doing so, his attachment to action is easily wiped out. Attachment is the only obstacle to God-Realization. As soon as a Karmayogī gets rid of this attachment, he realizes God naturally (Gītā 4/38).

The term 'Kartavya' stands for the action which we can perform, which must be performed and which is conducive to perfection. The aim of this human life is to attain perfection, not to enjoy pleasures or suffer pains. Even other beings such as birds, beasts, creepers, moths, trees and plants etc., come across favourable and unfavourable circumstances in the form of pleasure and pain. But they don't know what actions they must perform. Moreover they have not got the right to attain perfection. The Lord declares that this is His decided view in which there is no room for doubt and also this is His best view which is perfect according to the scriptures and which is conducive to perfection.

Link:–The Lord in the fourth verse of this chapter declared the relinquishment to be threefold. So now in the next three verses He describes them.

नियतस्य तु संन्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्यते ।
मोहात्तस्य परित्यागस्तामसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ ७ ॥

niyatasya tu saṁnyāsaḥ karmaṇo nopapadyate
mohāttasya parityāgastāmasaḥ parikīrtitaḥ

Verily the renunciation of any duty that ought to be done is not proper. Its abandonment through delusion (ignorance) is declared to be Tāmasika (of the mode of ignorance). 7

Comment:

[The Lord describes the threefold relinquishment because Arjuna wanted to abandon his duty (Gītā 2/5). So Lord Kṛṣṇa by explaining the threefold relinquishment wanted to warn Arjuna and other human beings that one should not abandon one's duty but should abandon attachment to it and also it's fruit. This sort of abandonment is called Sāttvika abandonment which leads a man to freedom from the worldly bondage.

Secondly the Lord in the seventeenth chapter described faith and food etc., of three kinds. So here also He describes abandonment of three kinds.]

'Niyatasya tu saṁnyāsaḥ karmaṇo nopapadyate'—The Lord in the preceding verse explained His decided and best view. But this Tāmasika abandonment is quite contrary and inferior to that. So the term 'Tu' (Verily) is used here.

The duty that ought to be discharged must be discharged. One's profession according to one's caste and social order, hospitality, sacrifice, prayer and recitation of Gāyatrī mantra (the sacred Vedic hymn) and such other acts should not be abandoned.

'Mohāttasya parityāgastāmasaḥ

parikirtitaḥ'—Abandonment of any such act out of delusion (ignorance) is declared to be Tāmasika. Not to attend an urgent meeting or divine discourse, not to attend to the sick parents; not to attend the court at the right time and such other negligence out of heedlessness, idleness and laziness are examples of Tāmasika abandonment.

What is the difference between 'Vihita Karma' and 'Niyata Karma?' All the actions which are sanctioned by the scriptures are called 'Vihita Karma'. All those actions sanctioned by the scriptures can't be performed by a person because there is mention of several fasts on all the dates and days. If a man observes all those fasts, when will he have meals? But out of those actions sanctioned by the scriptures, the duty that ought to be done according to one's caste, (social order) stage of life and circumstances is called 'Niyata Karma'. All the occupations of the four castes (Varṇas)—Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra are included in the 'Niyata Karma'.

If one's duty is abandoned out of delusion, it is Tāmasika abandonment and if it is abandoned in order to gain pleasure and rest, it is Rājasika abandonment. But if the duty is discharged by abandoning the desire for fruit and also attachment to it, it is Sāttvika abandonment. It means that a Tāmasika person gets entangled in delusion, a Rājasika person in comforts and luxuries while a Sāttvika person discharges his duty carefully without expecting any reward. A person abandons his affinity with actions and their fruits because of this Sāttvika nature or Sāttvika abandonment, not the Rājasika and the Tāmasika ones, because in fact the latter two are not abandonment in the true sense of the word.

A layman regards the abandonment of actions as real abandonment. But according to Lord Kṛṣṇa real abandonment consists in abandoning attachment and desire which lead to bondage (Gītā 13/21).

If the external abandonment is regarded as the real abandonment, every dead person should attain salvation because he abandons all the worldly possessions as well as his body and he does not even remember them. Therefore the internal abandonment of attachment and desire etc., is the real abandonment which frees a man from bondage.

★

दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म कायक्लेशभयात्त्यजेत्।
स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत्॥ ८॥

duḥkhamityeva yatkarma kāyakleśabhayāttyajet
sa kṛtvā rājasaṁ tyāgaṁ naiva tyāgaphalaṁ labhet

He who abandons action because it is painful or from fear of physical suffering, does not gain the reward of relinquishment by practising such Rājasika relinquishment. 8

Comment:

'Duḥkhamityeva yatkarma'—The Rājasika people think that all the acts of sacrifice, penance and charity etc., sanctioned by the scriptures are painful because in performing them there are so many restrictions. Moreover a lot of money has to be spent. They hold this opinion because they have no faith in the scriptures, the next world and the actions prescribed by the scriptures.

'Kāyakleśabhayāttyajet'— The Rājasika people think that in the performance of actions sanctioned by the scriptures and the social decorum they have to suffer hardships by forgoing bodily comforts *. They feel dependent and sad while discharging their duty according to their caste (social order) and stage of life and while obeying their parents, teachers, and masters. But they feel independent and happy while they work according to their own will. They don't want to be governed by scriptural ordinances. They

* A man feels physical suffering because of his attachment to the body and the sense of mine with it.

want to lead a lazy, idle and carefree life of a Sādhu or a pensioner by abandoning the household affairs which involve physical and mental exertion.

Here a doubt arises that in the means of gaining true knowledge there is mention of perception of evil and pain (Gītā 13/8) while here it is mentioned that the action which is abandoned because it is painful or from fear of physical suffering, is Rājasika relinquishment i.e., here relinquishment of action is forbidden. These two statements seem contrary. The clarification is that they are not contrary, but the topics are different. There it is mentioned that one should perceive evil and pain in pleasures and so should abandon pleasures. But here is the topic of performing one's duty. So the duty must not be relinquished, rather it must be performed. Perception of evil and pain in pleasures develops dispassion which leads to God-Realization while relinquishment of one's duty, because it is painful or full of physical suffering, leads to bondage (Gītā 3/9). The fruit of both the Rājasika and Tāmasika relinquishment is Tāmasika which conduces the people to sink downward (Gītā 14/18).

Now a question arises that a devotee, who attends divine discourses and listens to the glories of the Lord, develops dispassion and so he renounces the daily duties and is absorbed in devotion and adoration, should his relinquishment not be regarded as Rājasika? No, actually it is not so because God-Realization is the aim of human life. So if a striver renounces other actions and is engaged in devotion and adoration etc., he performs his real duty. He can't indulge in heedlessness and indolence. But those who practise Rājasika or Tāmasika relinquishment will indulge in evil propensities such as heedlessness and indolence etc., because they are interested in pleasures.

'Sa kṛtvā rājasaṁ tyāgaṁ naiva tyāgaphalaṁ labhet'— Peace immediately follows renunciation. But a Rājasika person does not attain peace as the fruit of his relinquishment because his relinquishment is in order to gain rest, comforts and luxuries etc., as can be seen even in animals. So such a person instead of attaining peace has to receive punishment as the fruit of the neglect of his duties.

कार्यमित्येव यत्कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन ।
सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः ॥ ९ ॥

kāryamityeva yatkarma niyataṁ kriyate'rjuna
saṅgaṁ tyaktvā phalaṁ caiva sa tyāgaḥ sāttviko mataḥ

But he who performs a prescribed duty (obligatory action), O Arjuna, because it ought to be done, abandoning attachment and also the desire for fruit, that relinquishment is regarded as Sāttvika (good). 9

Comment:

'Kāryamityeva yatkarma niyataṁ kriyate'rjuna'—Here the particles 'Iti' and 'Eva' have been added to the term 'Kāryam' which denote that the prescribed duty is only to be performed without any selfish motive or the desire for its fruit. By doing so the doer's affinity with the action is renounced. So the action (duty) does not lead him to bondage. He is bound only if he is attached to the action and its fruit (Gita 5/12).

All the duties which have been prescribed by the scriptures according to a person's caste, social order, position and circumstances etc., are included in the 'Niyata Karma'. He should discharge those duties very promptly and enthusiastically abandoning idleness, laziness and heedlessness. So the Lord in the context of the Discipline of Action has used the term 'Samācara' (perform efficiently) (Gītā 3/9, 19).

'Saṅgaṁ tyaktvā phalaṁ caiva'—He should not be attached to actions or the means (instruments) of actions nor should he have a desire for their fruits.

'Sa tyāgaḥ sāttviko mataḥ'*—Sāttvika Tyāga consists in relinquishing attachment to the action, to its fruit and also to the desire for its fruit. In Rājasika relinquishment actions are abandoned because they are painful and they cause physical suffering; in Tāmasika relinquishment the actions are abandoned out of delusion while in Sāttvika relinquishment actions are not abandoned but they are performed carefully and promptly according to the rules and regulations without expecting any reward. By Sāttvika relinquishment our affinity with actions and their fruit is renounced while in Rājasika and Tāmasika relinquishment it seems that we are not at all concerned with actions but actually the internal affinity is not renounced. The reason is that in Rājasika relinquishment a man abandons actions because they are painful and they cause physical suffering. So he remains attached to his comforts. Similarly in Tāmasika relinquishment when a man abandons actions out of delusion, he remains attached to delusion. Thus even abandonment (relinquishment) leads to bondage while performance of actions promptly in accordance with the scriptural injunctions leads to emancipation.

Link:—With what sense should the prescribed acts such as sacrifice, gift and penance be performed and the prohibited acts for the desire of fruits be relinquished? The answer comes.

न द्वेष्ट्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जते ।
त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥ १० ॥

na dveṣṭyakuśalaṁ karma kuśale nānuṣajjate
tyāgī sattvasamāviṣṭo medhāvī chinnasaṁśayaḥ

The wise man, who renounces, whose doubts are dispelled, who has no aversion to a disagreeable action and no attachment to an agreeable one, is situated in the self. 10

Comment:

'Na dveṣṭyakuśalaṁ karma'—The pious actions sanctioned by the scriptures, which are performed with the desire of fruit and which lead to rebirth (2/42-44; 9/20-21) and the prohibited evil actions which lead to demoniacal wombs and hells (16/7-20)—all these actions are disagreeable. A striver abandons such disagreeable actions but has no aversion to them. If he abandons them by having an aversion to them, he gets attached to aversion and that attachment is worse than the actions which are performed with a desire and also the prohibited vile actions.

'Kuśale nānuṣajjate'—All the actions which are performed according to the ordinence of the scriptures suited to one's caste, social order and circumstances etc., by relinquishing attachment and fruit and which lead to salvation, are called 'Kuśala'

* In the Gītā where there is the description of the three modes of nature (7/12; 14/5-18,22; 17/1,2, 8-10, 11-13, 17-22 and 18/20-28, 30-35, 37-39) the order is Sattva, Raja and Tama, while here the order is reversed. The reason is (i) If the Lord after the sixth verse (in the seventh verse) had described Sāttvika relinquishment, there would have been the repetition of the Lord's decided view and Sāttvika relinquishment. (ii) Something is proved superior if the inferior things have already been described. Therefore the Lord in order to prove superiority of the Sāttvika relinquishment first describes the Rājasika and the Tāmastka ones. (iii) In the verses tenth to twelfth there is description of the Sāttvika renouncer. So the Sāttvika relinquishment is given in the ninth verse so that they may be connected.

(Agreeable). A striver while performing such actions has no attachment to them.

'Tyāgī'—The real abandoner (renouncer) is he, who has neither aversion to a disagreeable action nor attachment to an agreeable one*. His relinquishment attains perfection when he is not in the least affected by action or inaction (Gītā 3/18; 4/18). Such a man is said to have attained to Yoga (Gītā 6/4).

'Medhāvī'—He whose actions are performed thoroughly and they are free from desire and thoughts of the world and are burnt up by the fire of wisdom, him even the wise call a man of learning (Gītā 4/19). It is a great wisdom if a man is not attached to actions while performing them. Such a person has been called wise among men (4/18).

'Chinnasaṁśayaḥ'—The doubts of such a person are dispelled because he remains established in the self where there is perfection. So there is no question of any doubt. A doubt subsists only where knowledge is imperfect i.e., we know something and we don't know something.

'Sattvasamāviṣṭaḥ'—When a man relinquishes attachment etc., he automatically gets situated in the self. In the nineteenth verse of the fifth chapter also it is mentioned that such a person gets established in the Eternal.

Link:–Why should a man bother to have no aversion to a disagreeable action and no attachment to an agreeable action? Why should he not relinquish actions altogether? The Lord clarifies the doubt in the next verse.

न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः ।
यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥ ११ ॥

na hi dehabhṛtā śakyaṁ tyaktuṁ karmāṇyaśeṣataḥ
yastu karmaphalatyāgī sa tyagītyabhidhīyate

It is indeed impossible for any embodied being to abandon actions entirely. But he who relinquishes the fruit of action is verily called a relinquisher. 11

Comment:

'Na hi dehabhṛtā† śakyaṁ tyaktuṁ karmāṇyaśeṣataḥ'—The embodied beings can't abandon actions because the body is the evolute of Prakṛti (Matter) and Prakṛti is ever active. So how can an embodied being abstain from actions? He may relinquish acts of sacrifice, gift, penance and pilgrimage etc. But how can he abandon eating, drinking, walking, sitting, standing, sleeping and waking etc.?

Secondly the internal relinqishment (relinquishment from heart) is the real relinquishment. The external relinquishment is unreal and temporary. A man relinquishes the external actions in trance. But this trance is also an action because in trance affinity with the causal body persists. So there is deviation from trance also.

No one can remain inactive even for a moment (Gītā 3/5). Man does not attain freedom from action by non- performance of actions, nor does he attain to perfection by renunciation of action (Gītā 3/4).

A Vital Fact

A man ever remains sentient, uniform

* The person, who rises above the pairs of opposites in the form of favourable and unfavourable ones, renounces the prohibited actions without aversion; he performs the prescribed actions without attachment. As a crawling baby is engaged in an action and refrains from it without attachment and aversion, a transcendental man also performs actions without attachment and aversion (A child does so out of ignorance while he does so because of his discrimination) (wisdom).

† Here the term 'Dehabhṛtā' stands for the embodied beings i.e., those who have identified themselves with the body.

and immutable while Prakṛti is mutable and kaleidoscopic. So long as a man is attached to Prakṛti and its evolute, the body, and identifies himself with it, he can't abandon actions entirely because he regards the actions of the body as his own actions.

Secondly a man has assumed his affinity with Prakṛti by neglecting discrimination. He has assumed the self as the body and the body as his own. It is because of the assumption of egoism and mineness that the embodied being can't abandon actions entirely.

'Yastu* karmaphalatyāgī sa tyāgī-tyabhidhīyate'—He who relinquishes his affinity for action and its fruit is a relinquisher. So long as he has his affinity with agreeable or disagreeable, good or bad action, he is not a relinquisher. When a man assumes things and actions as his own, he is attached to them. Moreover he is also attached to the fruits of those actions. But as soon as his aim is to relinquish the fruit of actions, all his actions are directed towards the welfare of the world. The reason is that he realizes that he has received everything from the world and so it belongs to the world. Besides, the actions and their fruits appear and disappear while he ever remains uniform and immutable. Having this sort of discrimination he gives up the fruit of actions very easily. Such a person who relinquishes the fruit of action is called a relinquisher.

There neither was nor is, nor can be, nor is there any possibility of affinity of the immutable self with the mutable fruit of action. It is out of ignorance that he has assumed this affinity. As soon as this assumed affinity is renounced, he is called a renouncer. This can be explained by an illustration.

When a person renounces his kinsmen and becomes an ascetic (saint) from his heart, the prosperity or adversity or ruin of the family makes no difference for him. The reason is that he gives up his assumed affinity with his family. This was the two way affinity—from his side as well as from the side of the family. But as far as his affinity with Prakṛti is concerned, it is only he who has assumed this affinity, Prakṛti has not assumed it. So if he wants to relinquish this affinity, he can relinquish it very easily without any doubt.

Link:—In the preceding verse the Lord declared that he who relinquishes the fruit of action is verily called a relinquisher. What happens if he does not relinquish the fruit of action? The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम्।
भवत्यत्यागिनां प्रेत्य न तु संन्यासिनां क्वचित्॥ १२॥

aniṣṭamiṣṭaṁ miśraṁ ca trividhaṁ karmaṇaḥ phalam
bhavatyatyāginām pretya na tu saṁnyāsināṁ kvacit

Pleasant, unpleasant and mixed—threefold is the fruit of action accruing after death to those who have not relinquished the fruit, but there is none here or hereafter for those who have relinquished the fruit. 12

Comment:

'Aniṣṭamiṣṭaṁ miśraṁ ca trividhaṁ karmaṇaḥ phalam'—An action bears three kinds of fruit— pleasant (good), unpleasant (evil) and mixed. In the world generally a person reaps the mixed fruit for his actions. For example when a man earns money by working hard, he gets the necessities of life, this is pleasant fruit. But he has to pay income tax, or again there is loss of money, this is unpleasant fruit. It means that in the pleasantness there is partial unpleasantness and in the unpleasantness there is partial pleasantness because there is no creature in

* Here the term 'Tu' denotes that the person who relinquishes the fruit of actions is superior to common mundane people because his aim is God-Realization or salvation.

the world that is not bound by the three modes of Nature (Gītā 18/40). This world is the place of sorrow or suffering (8/15, 9/33). But no circumstances are totally pleasant or totally unpleasant. There is predominance of one. In fact the fruit of actions is mixed because all actions are clouded by defects (18/48).

'Bhavatyatyāginām pretya'—The common folk, not the renouncers, reap these three kinds of fruit. Actually the actions and their fruits are connected with Prakṛti, not with the self because the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., are the evolutes of Prakṛti. When a man (self) performs actions being attached to them, he has to reap pleasant, unpleasant and mixed fruits in the form of favourable and unfavourable circumstances. These circumstances make him happy and sad which bind him.

He who feels happy in favourable circumstances, can't escape sadness in unfavourable circumstances. So long as he enjoys pleasures, he will have to suffer pain. He can't be free from worry, sorrow, fear and agitation etc.

By the expression 'Pretya bhavati' the Lord means to convey that those who, don't relinquish the fruit of actions, have to reap pleasant, unpleasant and mixed fruits after death. But by the expression 'Na tu saṁnyāsināṁ kvacit' He wants to convey that those, who have relinquished the fruit of actions, have not to reap the fruit here or after death. It means that the non-relinquishers reap the fruit after death but they may also reap it here.

'Na tu saṁnyāsināṁ kvacit'— The renouncers (relinquishers) have not to reap the fruit of their actions here or hereafter. The favourable and the unfavourable circumstances as the fruit of actions appear but they are not affected by them because they remain neutral. Moreover they realize the reality that the self needs neither action nor anything. They perform all the actions for the welfare of others. The actions performed with their physical body, the thoughts possessed with their subtle body and the trance with their causal body—all are for the welfare of others. The reason is that whatever they possess is of the world and so it is to be utilized for the welfare of the world. They commit an error when they think of their own welfare only.

Here in the term 'Saṁnyāsināṁ' there is identity between the relinquisher (Karmayogī) and renouncer Saṁnyāsī (Sāṅkhyayogī). A Karmayogī remains detached from actions while a Sāṅkhyayogī remains totally unconnected with actions. A Karmayogī has no desire for the fruit of action i.e., he has no feeling of mineness with it, while a Sāṅkhya-Yogī relinquishes his egoism. If the feeling of mineness is renounced, the feeling of egoism is automatically renounced. Similarly the feeling of mineness is renounced with the renouncement of egoism. So in the context of the Karmayoga the Lord has first mentioned the abandonment of the sense of mineness and then of egoism (2/71) while in Sāṅkhyayoga he has reversed the order (18/53). In both there is relinquishment of affinity with Prakṛti and its evolutes.

Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa that he desired to know severally the nature of renunciation (Saṁnyāsa) and of relinquishment (Tyāga). Therefore, the Lord here by using the term 'Saṁnyāsināṁ' wants to convey that a Karmayogī thinks that nothing is his, nothing is wanted by him and nothing is to be done for him. Similarly a Sāṅkhyayogī thinks that nothing is his and nothing is wanted by him. A Sāṅkhyayogī does not assume his affinity with Prakṛti and its evolute and so there is no need to say that nothing is to be done for him.

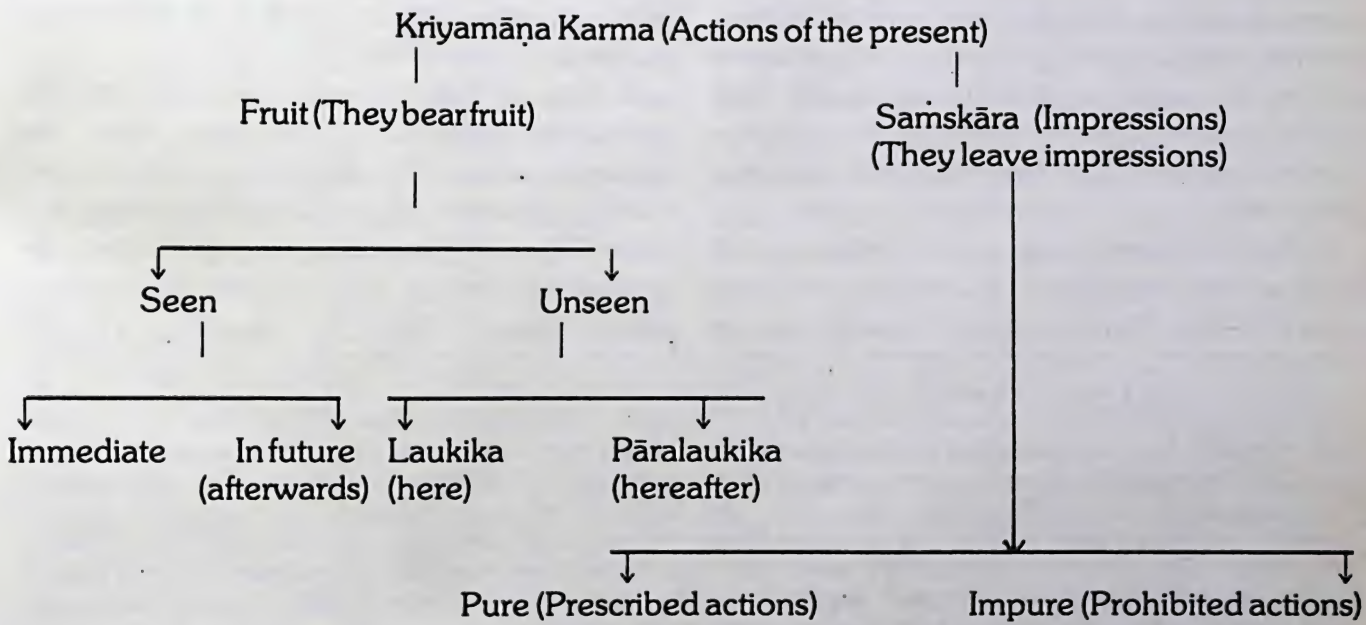
Here the Lord instead of using the term 'Tyāgināṁ' uses the term 'Saṁnyāsināṁ' in order to convey that the state of neutrality which is obtained by men of renunciation (Sāṅkhyayogī) is also reached by men of action (Karma Yogī) (Gītā 5/4-5). Secondly till now the Lord explained that a Karmayogī remains detached and neutral. Now by using the term 'Saṁnyāsināṁ' He means to convey that He will explain how to attain that state of detachment or neutrality by Sāṅkhyayoga.

An Important Fact in Connection with Actions

'Puruṣa' and 'Prakṛti' are two distinct

entities. 'Puruṣa' is never subject to change while 'Prakṛti' is always subject to change. When a man identifies himself with Prakṛti, he becomes the doer of actions with such identification he regards himself as the body. So he develops the sense of mine with the objects acquired. For this mineness the desire for the things unacquired springs. Till these evils such as desire, mineness and identification subsist, an activity is called an action. When he renounces this identification, his actions don't bear fruit for him, they turn into inaction. When a liberated soul realizes the self, the actions performed by his body are actions in inaction (Gītā 4/18). Actually all actions are performed by the modes of nature. But a man by identifying himself with Prakṛti (Body) thinks, "I am the doer" (Gītā 3/27; 13/29).

Actions are of three kinds—Kriyamāṇa* (Actions of the present), Sañcita (Collected action of the several past human lives and also of this life till now) and Prārabdha (Some of the actions whose fruit the man has to reap during this life in the form of favourable and unfavourable circumstances).



Kriyamāṇa actions are of two kinds—Good (pleasant) and evil (unpleasant). The actions which are performed in accordance with the ordinance of the scriptures are called good while the actions which are performed against the ordinance of the scriptures out of desire, anger, greed and attachment are evil.

They bear fruits in two forms—direct fruit and fruit in the form of impression (influence). The direct fruit is divided into two parts—seen and unseen. The seen fruit can further be divided into two parts—immediate and remote. As the immediate fruit of the tasteful food is that it satisfies hunger and its fruit in future is that it gives strength. Similarly he who eats chillis in excess with food, has a burning sensation in the tongue, mouth, throat, ears and eyes. It is the immediate fruit. It causes diseaes in future. It is the fruit in future.

Similarly the unseen fruit can either be reaped here or hereafter. The acts of sacrifice, gifts, penance, pilgrimage and chanting etc., can bear fruit here in the form of riches, sons, praise and honour etc.,† and hereafter in the attainment of heaven. Similarly the fruit in the form of fine, imprisonment and execution of evil actions such as theft, robbery and murder is the unseen fruit which is reaped here while the birth as birds, beasts, insects and creepers and residence in hells is the fruit which is reaped hereafter.

In this connection a point needs attention. If the fruit of evil actions is reaped here in the form of fine, imprisonment, insult and

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* New actions can be performed only in human life and so are their impressions (Gītā 4/12; 15/2). Other lives such as of birds and beasts etc., are only to reap the fruit of the past actions.

† Here the future fruit of the seen and the mundane fruit of the unseen seem similar yet are different. The future fruit of the seen is reaped direct without becoming 'Prārabdha' while the mundane fruit of the unseen is reaped by becoming 'Prārabdha'.

reproach etc., it will not have to be reaped hereafter. The Lord is omniscient. He maintains a record of all the sins committed by a person and the fruit reaped by him. So whatever punishment is given to a man is always just because the Lord is the disinterested friend of every being. He being omniscient knows how much punishment he has suffered as the fruit of his evil actions and how much more he has to suffer. So the pain or punishment that is inflicted upon a person is the fruit of his sinful action.*

Similarly if a man reaps the fruit of his virtuous actions here in the form of riches, honour, praise and freedom from sickness etc., he does not reap it in the next world. The present actions leave two kinds of impression – pure and impure. The prescribed actions leave pure and holy impressions while the prohibited actions leave impure and unholy impressions. These impressions form a man's nature (habit). When impure impressions are rooted out, a man's nature becomes pure and holy. But because of the past actions even liberated souls are found different in their nature, though their actions are pure and are conducive to salvation for the entire world.

The nature (habit) which is formed by the impressions of the past actions is very strong and it can't be easily rooted out†. Similarly people of different castes perform actions according to the nature of their castes (Varṇa). So Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, "That which, through delusion, you don't wish to do, bound by your own acts born of your nature, you will helplessly perform" (Gītā 18/60).

A serious thought is to be given to this pertinent question. It is said that the personal nature of a man sways him and he can't overpower it. On the other hand it is said that every human being is free to do any action and so he can get, through his efforts, what he likes . The question is which

* In this connection I heard an anecdote. There was an honest gentleman in a village. In front of his house there was the house of a goldsmith. One day some customers gave a lot of gold to the goldsmith to prepare ornaments. The constable on night duty came to know about it. So at night he murdered the goldsmith and wanted to run away with the box full of gold. The honest gentleman saw him going away. He caught him red handed and challeanged him. The constable wanted to pacify him by offering him a share of the gold. But he did not agree because he was honest. The constable whistled and having heard the whistle several other constables came there. They caught the honest man. He was charged with murder and theft. A law-suit was filed against him. When he was presented before the magistrate, he tried to argue that it was not he but the constable who was a criminal. But other constables also confirmed that he had been caught red handed by them committing a theft, having committed the murder.

The magistrate after listening to the statements of all of them finally gave the judgement that the gentleman would be hanged to death. The honest gentleman muttered "In the domain of the Lord there is no justice. I am going to be condemned to death while the real culprit is set free."

The magistrate heard his words. He was somewhat convinced that he was speaking the truth. So he made a plan to testify the truth of his words.

Next morning a person came crying that his brother had been murdered. So the culprit should be discovered. The magistrate ordered those two men to bring the dead body. The dead body was lying on a cot, his body was stained with blood and he was covered with a long piece of cloth. When they were carrying the cot, the constable said to the prisoner, "If you had agreed to my proposal, you would have received a share of the gold and also escaped death." The prisoner said, "There is no justice in the domain of God because an honest man has to suffer and a criminal is set free."

The man lying on the cot was listening to their conversation. When the cot was put, the person removing the stained clothes stood up and he narrated the conversation between the constable and the prisoner to the magistrate. The magistrate was wonder-struck. He sentenced the constable to imprisonment. The magistrate was also very honest. He never took bribe. So he called the gentleman in loneliness and said, "In this case you are innocent but tell me frankly whether you have committed any murder during the life." He replied, "There was a man of immoral conduct who had illicit relations with my wife. I requested him not to come to my wife in my absence. One day when I came back home, I found him with my wife. I lost self-control, murdered him and threw his dead body into the river.' No one knew this incident." The magistrate said, "I was perplexed how I could give the wrong judgement when I always perform my duty very honestly and sincerely." So the magistrate sentenced him to death for his past crime and the constable was also condemned to death.

Thus if a person suffers punishment for his crimes here, he has not to suffer it in the next world. Here in the world the punishment is generally mild while in the next world it is more severe (it is with interest.), But a person has to suffer the punishment either here or hereafter.

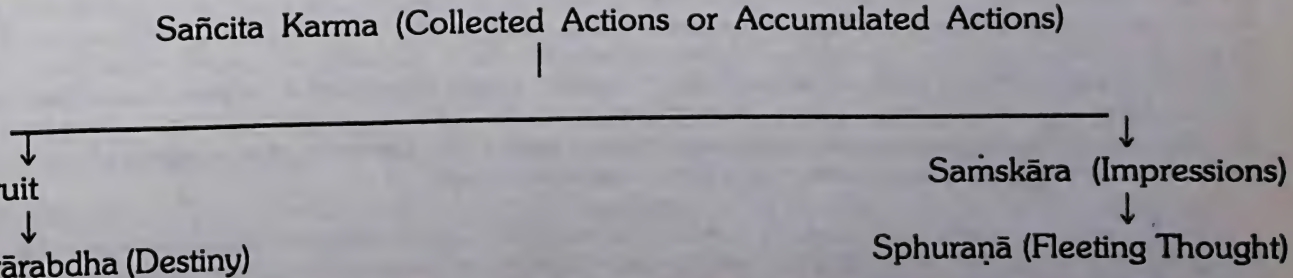
† A Tiger remains satisfied in a dense forest; a lion likes a dense cave; a swan likes a blooming lotus; an eagle likes a cremation ground; a gentleman wants to live with other gentlemen and a mean fellow wants to accompany the mean persons. It is true that a man doesn't give up his nature.

of the two is more powerful—the personal nature or freedom of action. The answer is that the two are two different things. They have their own importance and power, at their own place. The nature described in the sixtieth verse of the eighteenth chapter is the personal nature pertaining to caste. A human being's nature is formed according to the caste he is born in and the sperm and ovum his body is constituted with. That nature can't be changed and need not be changed. Even the scriptures don't advise to change it. A man is to work under its sway. But in the personal nature there is impure part of attachment and aversion. God has given a man power to wipe out this impure part. He is free in making his nature pure by wiping out attachment and aversion. Either through the practice of 'Karmayoga' as enunciated in 3/34 or through the practice of devotion by surrendering himself to God, he can make his nature quite pure (18/62). Thus both the forcefulness of the personal nature and independence of a man to act are proved. It means that a man is free to purify his nature while personal (pure) nature is forceful in engaging a man in actions according to his caste.

The sharp edge of a sword made of steel turns to gold if it is touched with the philosopher's stone (Pārasa) but its sharpness, edge and shape don't undergo any change. Similarly when a man's nature is purified, his actions are also pure. But he may perform actions according to his caste, (social order), stage of life, religion and beliefs etc., and so his actions may be different from others. If a man of the priest class attains salvation, he will maintain more purity than a man of the labour class who has also attained salvation. It is so because of their nature. But this nature is not defective. So it need not be wiped out.

A man has to follow the cycle of birth and death and he is born in good and evil wombs because of his nature of assuming affinity with the unreal. A man is free in purifying his nature by rooting out desire, attachment and identification with Matter. When a man having renounced his egoism takes refuge in the Lord, his nature is purified in the same way as iron is purified and turns into gold when it is touched with the philosopher's stone. When a man's nature is purified, he does not incur sins by performing actions ordained by his own nature (Gītā 18/47). When a devotee takes refuge in the Lord, he has no affinity with Prakṛti (Matter) and the Lord's nature descends on him. As the Lord is the disinterested friend of all beings (Gītā 5/29) he also becomes the disinterested friend of all beings (Śrīmadbhāgavata 3/25/21).

Similarly when a Karmayogī renounces attachment and aversion, his nature is purified. Then the actions by him are performed for the welfare of the world automatically. When his actions are performed for the welfare of the world, he gets identified with the power of God because the Lord is ever engrossed in the welfare of all beings. Actually this power of the Lord is open to all human beings. But egoism, attachment and aversion become the stumbling blocks in approaching it. As soon as they are renounced the Lord's power starts functioning.



Actions performed during past lives and till now are called 'Accumulated Actions' (Sañcita Karma). They consist of two portions-fruit and impressions. They are stored in the inner sense. The fruit-portion forms 'Prārabdha' and from the impression-

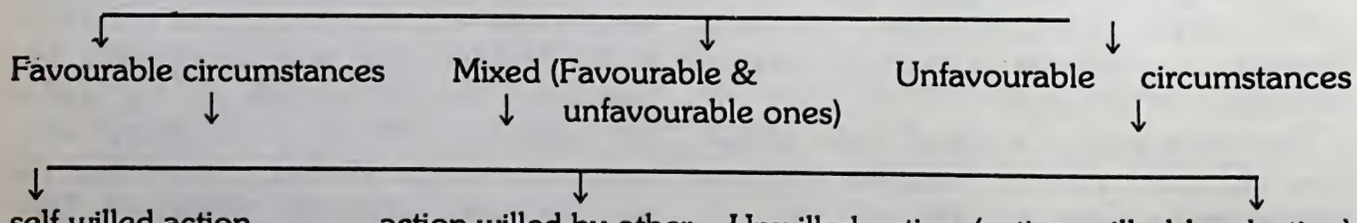
portion, there are mere fleeting thoughts without attachment (Sphuraṇā). Accumulated actions performed in the present life are responsible for inspiration to action. Rarely the accumulated actions of past lives also cause such inspiration.* For example if in a pot we store onion and then place wheat, gram and barley etc., in it, while taking out these commodities from the pot, what was placed last, comes out first. But sometimes pungency of onion is also experienced. This example is not fully applicable as these commodities are manifest while accumulated actions are unmanifest. This illustration is to bring home the point that generally there are inspirations to actions through accumulated actions of the present life, and they are rarely through accumulated actions of past lives.

In dream (sleep) also the unfulfilled thoughts (ambition) of Sañcita are revealed†. In dream there is no order and system. You may have a dream and see the city of Delhi in which there is the market of Bombay and the shops of Calcutta. Similarly you talk to a man who is either dead or alive.

In the state of wakefulness different thoughts come to the mind. When his intellect loses control over his body, mind and senses etc., his utterances are non-sensical. In that state he can't discriminate between the right and the wrong. In absence of the proper functioning of his discriminative faculty, he is called a plain madman. But when his body, senses and mind are under control, he speaks sensible language. He is like a wise madman.

So long as a man does not realize God, the thoughts come to his mind. But when he realizes God, evil thoughts are altogether rooted out. So evil thoughts never come to the mind of the liberated soul. He never speaks and acts against the ordinance of the scriptures even in the state of unconsciousness or insanity because his inner sense is purified.

Prārabdha Karma (Destiny)



Out of the accumulated actions the actions which are inclined to bear fruit are called 'Prārabdha' (Destiny). The destiny bears fruit in the form of favourable and unfavourable circumstances through (i) self-will, (ii) will of others and (iii) the will of destiny. Examples:—

(i) A man buys some goods and gets profit or sustains loss as the fruit of his 'Prārabdha'. But he buys the goods by his own will.

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* A thought comes to the mind according to the Sañcita Karma as well as the Prārabdha. The thought of the Sañcita Karma can't force a man to perform an action. But if there are attachment and aversion in it, it by becoming a Saṅkalpa (Projection or Pursuit of the mind) can force him to act. The Sphuraṇā of Prārabdha forces a man to act in order to enable him to get the fruit of past actions. But by applying his discrimination he should check himself from performing prohibited actions and he is free in doing so.

† In the state of wakefulness also there are three states – wakefulness, sleep and sound sleep. When a man acts being alert, that is the state of wakefulness. But if any other thought, comes to his mind, that is sleep in wakefulness. But sometimes he is in such a state where he has no inclination to act, that is the state of sound-sleep in wakefulness.

It is because of the momentum to act that in the state of wakefulness, the state of sound-sleep is rarely seen. But if a striver can adopt and maintain this state of sound-sleep in wakefulness, he will quickly progress in the spiritual path because in that state he is identified with God or the self. Though in sound-sleep also his connection with the world is renounced, yet he can't realize the self because his intellect merges in ignorance. But when a man is in the state of sound-sleep in wakefulness, he realizes the self because his intellect remains awake.

This state is superior even to trance because it happens naturally while in trance the mind has to be concentrated through practice and his egoism also persists.

(ii) A person finds a purse full of gold coins all of a sudden or he injures his arm when the branch of a tree falls on his arm. It is the fruit of his destiny through the will of destiny.

(iii) A boy is adopted by a rich man and the boy becomes the owner of the rich man's property. Similarly a man's wealth is stolen by thieves. It is the fruit of his destiny by the will of others.

The destiny results in the form of favourable and unfavourable circumstances but it does not force a man to perform forbidden actions. If a person is forced to perform prohibited actions as the fruit of his 'Prārabdha', the ordinance of the scriptures for the prescribed and prohibited actions will be of no avail. Secondly if he goes on performing prohibited actions according to his destiny, there will be no end of his prohibited actions.

The 'Prārabdha Karma' results in two sorts of fruits—acquired and unacquired. The favourable or unfavourable circumstances which a person is getting now are called 'acquired fruit'; while during this life such circumstances which he is going to get in future is called 'unacquired fruit'.*

The destiny can bear fruit in the form of favourable and unfavourable circumstances either at present or in future. The actions which are performed at present bear fruit and that fruit is added to the accumulated actions. So long as there are accumulated actions, there is destiny which results in favourable and unfavourable circumstances. These circumstances can't force a man to be happy or sad. It is his affinity with the circumstances which makes him happy or sad. If by applying his discrimination he does not assume his affinity, he can remain equanimous.

Whether the favourable or unfavourable circumstances, which a man faces in his life, are the result of 'Prārabdha' (Destiny) or 'Puruṣārtha' (Present efforts). In this connection there are many doubts. Before getting the satisfactory answer to this question it is necessary to understand what is 'Prārabdha' (Destiny) and what is 'Puruṣārtha' (Effort or labour).

A man has desires of four kinds—for 'Artha' (Wealth), 'Dharma' (Righteousness) 'Kāma' (Lust) and 'Mokṣa' (Salvation).

(1) Artha (Wealth) —Wealth is of two kinds unmoving and moving. Gold, silver, money and property etc., belong to the former kind while cows, buffaloes, horses, camels, sheep and goats etc., belong to the latter kind.

(2) Dharma (Righteousness) —Acts of sacrifice, penance, charity, fast and pilgrimages etc., which are performed with or without the desire for their fruits are included in 'Dharma.'

(3) Kāma (Lust)—The mundane pleasures are known as 'Kāma'. They are of eight kinds—Word (Sound), touch, form, taste, smell, honour, praise and comfort.

(a) Word (Sound)—Word is of two kinds—form of alphabets (descriptive) and form of sound. Grammar, dictionary, literature, novel, drama and story etc., are all alphabetical* while musical instruments are sounding†. A person derives pleasure out of these alphabetical and sounding words.

(b) Touch—The pleasure which is born of contact with wife, son and friend etc., and with skin is the pleasure by touch.

(c) Form—The pleasure derived by seeing movies, and other beautiful objects etc., is the pleasure of form.

(d) Taste—The pleasure that a man derives by tasting sweet, salty and sour dishes etc., is the pleasure through taste.

(e) Smell—The pleasure derived out of the smell of oil, scents and flowers etc., is pleasure through smell.

(f) Honour—A man derives pleasure when the so-called his body is honoured.

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*. There are ten kinds of sentiments in the descriptive word. They are of conjugal love, humour, pity, wrath, bravery, dread, disgust, wonder, serenity and affection. In all these sentiments the heart melts. If these sentiments are inclined towards the Lord they lead to salvation. But if pleasure is derived out of them, they are degrading.

† Drums, tambourines and timbrels etc., made of skin, guitar and mandolin made of wires, harmonium and flute etc., which are blown, and cymbal etc., which are clapped—these are musical instruments.

(g) Praise—He derives pleasure when his name is praised.
(h) Comfort—He dėrives pleasure out of idleness, laziness and comfort.
(4) Mokṣa (Salvation)—Self-Realization, benediction, salvation and God-Realization are the names given to Mokṣa.

Out of these four the two — wealth and righteousness enhance each other. But if both of them are utilized in order to satisfy desires, after satisfying desires both of them perish. Desire devours both of them. So in the Gītā the Lord declares that desire is insatiable and He asks Arjuna to kill this enemy viz., desire (3/37-43).

If righteous actions are performed by renouncing desire, they having purified the inner sense, lead to salvation. Similarly if wealth is spent for the welfare of others, abandoning the desire for its reward, it also having purified the inner sense leads to salvation.

Out of these four in 'Artha' (Wealth) and 'Kāma' (Desire or lust) there is predominance of destiny while in righteousness and salvation there is predominance of 'Puruṣārtha' (Effort or labour). Therefore it has been declared—

A man should be satisfied with his wife, son, family, food and wealth but he should never be satisfied with the study of the sacred books, adoration, chanting of the Lord's name and charity. It means that a man gains wealth and pleasures as is destined and so he should be satisfied with them. But he should never be satisfied with the spiritual progress. He should go on labouring for salvation for which this human body has been bestowed upon him.

Actions are of two kinds—good (virtuous) and bad (evil). Virtuous actions result in favourable circumstances while evil actions result in unfavourable circumstances. But they can't force a man to be happy and sad. It is out of folly that a man feels happy and sad. If he gives up his folly by believing in God* or in destiny † he feels happy even in the most unfavourable circumstances because he gets rid of sins by facing the painful circumstances. Moreover he becomes alert and does not commit sins in future; and his inner sense is purified when he gets rid of his sins.

A striver should make the right use of the favourable and unfavourable circumstances. In favourable circumstances he should spend his money and material for the welfare of others, he should not enjoy them. In unfavourable circumstances he should abandon the desire for favourable circumstances. He should think that he is getting rid of his sins and the Lord by His grace has caused such circumstances so that he may be careful not to commit sins in future and may progress in the spiritual field. Thus he should feel happy. This is the proper use of unfavourable circumstances and if he feels sad in unfavourable circumstances, this is their misuse.

The Lord has not bestowed upon us this human life to enable us to enjoy pleasures and to suffer pain. Heaven is the abode for enjoyments and pleasures while hells and eighty-four lac forms of lives are for suffering pain. But the aim of human life is to attain salvation by transcending pleasures and pains. Those who remain negligent during the human life, follow the cycle of birth and death.

A man is free in abandoning favourable circumstances but he is dependent in abandoning unfavourable circumstances. This can be clarified by an illustration.

Rāmalāla borrowed a hundred rupees from Śyāmalāla and promised that he would return the amount with interest in a month. But he could not return. Śyāmalāla went to Rāmalāla's house several times as Rāmalāla promised. But he did not pay the amount. One day Śyāmalāla lost self-control and beat Rāmalāla with shoes. Rāmālala-filed a law suit in the criminal court. A

* As a mother remains compassionate while fondling and scolding her baby, similarly the Lord Who controls the virtues and vices of beings, ever remains compassionate to everyone of them.

† Whatever is to happen must happen and whatever is not to happen, will not happen. A man having such a determinate intellect is never worried.

summon was issued to Śyāmalāla. He presented himself in the court. The magistrate asked him, "Did you beat him with shoes?" Śyāmalāla said, "Yes, your honour. In spite of several promises he did not pay my money. So he compelled me to beat him with shoes. I gave him five blows with shoes. Kindly order him to return my money by deducting five rupees as a fine for five blows (with shoes)."

The magistrate smiled and said, "This is a criminal court. You will have to suffer imprisonment or fine for your crime. File a law- suit in the civil court if you want to get back your money. The two courts are different."

Thus the fruits of the evil actions are unpleasant circumstances. It is a case of the criminal court and a man can't escape it. But as far as the fruit of virtuous actions in the form of pleasant circumstances are concerned, that is a case of the civil court. The two are different. They can't nullify each other. Thus sins can't be nullified by virtuous actions. The two are accumulated separately. But if he performs any good act in order to repent, his sins perish.

Some people complain that there is no justice in the domain of the Lord* because in this world virtuous and good men are suffering while sinners are enjoying themselves. The answer is that virtuous persons are suffering because they are reaping the fruit of their past evil actions; their present virtuous actions will bear fruit. Similarly the sinners are reaping the sweet fruits of their past virtuous actions, not of the present sins.

Moreover there is one more point which needs attention. In favourable circumstances a man is proud of himself, he hates those whom he regards as inferior to him and is envious of other persons' better fortune. Thus externally he seems happy but actually he is not. On the other hand an ascetic who is dispassionate and a man of renunciation and who possesses neither wealth nor property may seem sad without possessions, to the worldly people. But actually his life is very serene and happy. So possessions and riches don't make a man happy and their shortage does not make him sad. Real happiness consists in serenity and happiness of the heart while sadness consists in burning sensation and sadness of the heart.

A man can be free from virtues by surrendering them to God without any desire for fruit but he can't get rid of sins by surrendering them to Him. He will have to suffer as the fruit of those sins because the actions against the ordinance of the Lord can't be surrendered to Him. This can be made clear by an illustration.

Once a king with many other people went to Haridwāra. Among the people there was a wise businessman and there was a cobbler. The cobbler thought that he would also act in the same way as the wise businessman would do. There when the priest started the vow-taking-ceremony, the businessman said, "I offer the charity of the hundred rupees which I lent to that Brāhmaṇa to Lord Kṛṣṇa." The cobbler saw that the businessman gained fame without paying even a single pice. So he wanted to do the same. He said, "I offer to Lord Kṛṣṇa the gift of a hundred rupees which I borrowed from the trader." By doing so he was very much pleased.

After a few days at the time of harvest the Brāhmaṇa came to the businessman and requested him to take grain for a hundred rupees and its interest. The businessman said that he had offered that amount to Lord Kṛṣṇa as charity, so he would not take it back. When the Brāhmaṇa insisted, the businessman asked him to offer it as a gift to his own sister or daughter. So the Brāhmaṇa had to go home without making any payment.

The trader who had lent a hundred rupees to the cobbler, went to him and demanded

* In the Vana section of the Mahābhārata there is an anecdote. One day Draupadī asked Yudhiṣṭhira, "You are suffering in exile following righteousness while Duryodhana is leading a luxurious life by enjoying the kingdom in spite of his unrighteousness and selfishness. Why?" Yudhiṣṭhira replied, "Those who follow the path of righteousness in order to get pleasures, actually don't know righteousness in the true sense of the term. They are just like animals who hanker after pleasures without knowing righteousness. Therefore humanity consists in following righteousness according to the ordinance of the scriptures without caring either for the favourable or the unfavourable circumstances."

his hundred rupees. The cobbler said, "I offered those hundred rupees to Lord Kṛṣṇa as the businessman did." The trader said,"You can't get rid of this debt in this way. You will have to pay me back the amount with interest." Thus he got the grain from the cobbler.

It means that we can't get rid of our sins and evil actions by surrendering them to God, we shall have to suffer for them. But if we surrender ourselves to God and take refuge in Him alone, He liberates us from all sins" (Gītā 18/66).

A second doubt arises that gaining of wealth does not depend on destiny because a man saves money by foul means such as non-payment of income tax and sales tax etc. But if he pays full tax, the money is spent. So how does it depend on destiny? The answer is that if he is destined to gain wealth, he will gain it by any other means. But if he is destined to lose it, he will sustain loss in every case such as in disease, theft, and litigation etc. Moreover the impressions of foul means such as theft of income tax etc., live for so many lives and they instigate him to commit thefts and he has to suffer punishment. Similarly enjoyment of pleasures is also pre-destined. A man may possess a lot of money but he may not enjoy pleasures due to illness. He may have to eat very meagre meal as prescribed by the physician. On the other hand even a man who does not possess much money may relish tasteful dishes in the company of generous friends and kinsmen or by any other such means*.

If a man is destined to gain wealth, he may be adopted by a rich man or he may find it buried in the earth while digging the earth or by any other way†. But a man neither believes in destiny nor depends on his hard work. So he is inclined to commit sins such as theft etc., which result in the burning sensation of the heart. Moreover he is likely to be punished. But if a man remains satisfied and has faith in destiny etc., his heart remains full of great serenity and bliss and he also receives the necessities of life. As unfavourable circumstances such as loss, death, dishonour and insult etc., can't be avoided, they appear though no one has a desire for them. Similarly the favourable circumstances are also inevitable. In the Bhāgavata it is mentioned—

"O King, as beings receive pain as is destined to them having no desire for it, so are the pleasures born of sense-contacts received in heaven and hell. Therefore a wise man should have no desire for those pleasures."

As a man is destined to receive either wealth or pleasures, separately, similarly he labours either for righteousness (Dharma) or for salvation (Mokṣa). In righteousness importance is attached to the things such as the body and wealth etc., while in attainment of salvation there is predominance of feelings and thoughts.

A man should perform his duty in accordance with the ordinance of the scriptures and social decorum, but he should be satisfied with its fruit. Lord Kṛṣṇa declares in the Gītā, "You have a right to action alone and never at all to its fruit" (Gītā 2/47). He is free in performing actions but he will receive the fruit which is destined.

How to get rid of the fruits of all the three kinds of actions—Kriyamāṇa (of the present), Sañcita (Accumulated) and Prārabdha (Destiny).

There are two entities—Prakṛti (Matter or Nature) and Puruṣa (Spirit or soul). Prakṛti is ever active while Puruṣa never undergoes any change in the form of activity. When the man (soul) assumes his affinity with Matter, he becomes a doer and an enjoyer. But when he renounces his affinity with Matter, he gets established in the self and actions don't effect him in anyway.

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* It is seen that even to a saint, who renounces the world, people offer so many gifts. Renunciation has a singularity that the person, who renounces wealth and does not attach any importance to it, develops a new destiny to gain wealth. Saint Rāmadāsa declares,"A saint does not possess either food or animals or cash but when he takes his seat to have meal, he receives all the articles of food."

† A man will receive whatever wealth he is destined to receive, no one can be an obstacle to it. So I am neither grieved nor surprised because whatever is ours can't be of others (Pañcatantra, Mitrasamprāpti 112).

Other points in connection with destiny—
(i) A man is destined to come across pleasant and unpleasant circumstances. But they can't force him to be sad or happy. He becomes sad or happy out of ignorance. So a wise man remains equanimous, he does not become either sad or happy by destiny.
(ii) A man's intellect is guided by his destiny. Being guided by his intellect a businessman gains by buying a commodity while the other loses by selling it. Thus gain or loss is decided by destiny. But a man is free in having honest or dishonest dealings because it is 'Kriyamāṇa' or new action.
(iii) A glass falls down from the hand and breaks into pieces. Does it happen out of negligence or by destiny?

A man should be careful in handling it but he should consider it as destined when it is broken. He should learn a lesson of being more careful in future.
(iv) What is the difference in the disease caused by destiny and the disease caused by harmful diet?

The disease caused by harmful diet can be cured by taking medicines but the disease caused by destiny can't be cured by medicines. But the religious rite as that of the chant of Mahāmṛtyuñjaya etc., can cure the diseases caused by destiny.

Diseases are of two kinds—Ādhi (Mental) and Vyādhi (Physical). Mental diseases can again be divided into two groups (a) sadness and worry etc. (b) lunacy. Sadness and worry are caused by ignorance while lunacy is caused by destiny. Worry and sadness etc., are given up through wisdom while lunacy is not abandoned but during lunacy a wise man can't perform any improper action which is forbidden by the scriptures.
(v) What is the difference between sudden death and untimely death?

If a man dies of snake-bite or by falling from the roof or by drowning or by heart failure or by an accident, this is sudden death which is pre-destined. Such a man dies after completing the duration of his life.

If a man commits suicide by hanging himself or by jumping into the well or fire or by lying under the moving train or by poisoning himself, this is untimely death. A man commits suicide without completing the span of life. He who commits suicide incurs the sin of murder and this is the new sin. God has bestowed upon us this human body so that we may realize Him. So it is a deadly sin if we destroy it by committing suicide.

Sometimes a person who makes an effort to commit suicide does not die. The reason is that his destiny is connected with the destiny of others. As the birth of his would-be-son or the good which is going to be done by him to the people or any unfavourable or favourable fruit which is going to be reaped by him because of his past actions, may restrain him from dying.
(vi) The person who is murdered dies as the fruit of his past actions while the murderer takes vengeance for the injuries inflicted upon him in the previous birth. Then why is the murderer held responsible for the crime of murder?

The murderer is guilty. The ruler has a right to murder a man or hang him to death for his crime, but a layman has no right to do so. Suppose a criminal is to be hanged for his crime and another person murders that criminal, the murderer of the criminal will be sentenced to death. He was to be executed by the executioners, not by any other person because executioners execute by order of the law. So no one should commit any evil action such as murder etc., nor think to do so by disregarding his discrimination. If people go on taking vengeance for their injuries of the previous birth, this chain will never come to an end and a man can never attain salvation.

This human life is not meant to take vengeance for the previous birth; that may be applicable to the life of a serpent etc. It is possible that our murderer of the previous birth is not liked by us naturally. But if we are envious of him and do harm to him, we are performing a new action

which will bear fruit. So we should not be overpowered by envy or jealousy or aversion etc. We should apply our discrimination while performing actions. It is also declared by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Gītā,"A man should never come under the sway of attachment and aversion" (3/34).

(vii) What is the difference between destiny and the Lord's grace?

Whatever a man receives is by destiny and that is given by the ruler (manager) God. As a labourer by working hard in the field gets his daily wages for the day but that is given by the landlord. If the landlord is not there and he does not order the labourer to work in his field and the labourer works of his own accord, will he get wages ? No. He gets wages only if he carries out the order of the landlord and works under his guidance and supervision.

If a servant performs his duty with promptness, skill and enthusiasm in order to please his master, the master may pay him more than he deserves and may make him a partner in his farm or factory etc. Similarly the Lord gives fruit to a man according to his actions. But if a man performs actions according to His order in order to please Him, He may give him even more than he deserves. But he who works by surrendering himself to God, God becomes a devotee to him (Śrīmad-bhāgavata 10/86/59). It is only He who is so generous and gracious that He makes his devout devotee His master. So if a person instead of surrendering himself to the feet of the Lord depends on the perishable, it means that his reason (intelligence) is completely destroyed. He does not perceive reality.

Link:–As in the Discipline of Action affinity with one's action is renounced, similarly in the Discipline of Knowledge (Sāṅkhya system) the self has no connection with actions. There are five factors which contribute to the accomplishment of actions. The Lord declares

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।
सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ।। १३ ।।

pañcaitāni mahābāho kāraṇāni nibodha me
sāṅkhye kṛtānte proktāni siddhaye sarvakarmaṇām

O mighty-armed (Arjuna), learn from Me, these five factors for neutralizing all actions which are contributory to the accomplishment of all actions, as stated in the Sāṅkhya doctrine. 13

Comment:

'Pañcaitāni mahābāho kāraṇāni'—These five factors are contributory to the performance of all actions whether prescribed or prohibited according to the Sāṅkhya doctrine. The self has no connection with actions.

'Nibodha me'—In the Sāṅkhya doctrine the Lord has used the term 'Nibodha' (Learn) (18/13, 50) while in other contexts He uses the term 'Śṛṇu' (Hear) (18/4, 19, 29, 36, 45, 64). It means that a striver should learn or understand the Sāṅkhya doctrine well. If he understands it well, he realizes the self immediately.

'Sāṅkhye kṛtānte proktāni siddhaye sarvakarmaṇām'—These five factors are contributory to the performance of all actions whether they are prescribed or prohibited, whether they are physical or mental or oral, whether they are gross or subtle. When a person regards himself as the doer of actions, he performs actions and those actions being accumulated bear fruit for him. But when he renounces the doership, those actions are performed but they don't bear fruit for him i.e., they don't lead him to sins or virtues or bondage.

Then only four factors remain by which all actions are accomplished. They are—the seat of action (body), the organs (senses), efforts and destiny (Gītā 18/14).

In the Sāṅkhya doctrine there is predominance of knowledge or discrimination. Then why has the Lord started the topic of the accomplishment of actions? The reason is that Arjuna belongs to the warrior class and it is his duty to fight. So Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna to fight being unattached to it either through Sāṅkhyayoga or Karmayoga. Arjuna wants to know the true nature of Sāṅkhyayoga. So Lord Kṛṣṇa begins the topic of actions through Sāṅkhya doctrine.

Arjuna wanted to abandon actions. So Lord Kṛṣṇa wanted to clarify that neither performance of action nor their abandonment leads to salvation. But when a man (the soul) renounces his affinity with the perishable Prakṛti, he attains salvation. That can be renounced either through Karmayoga (the Discipline of Action) or through Sāṅkhyayoga (the Discipline of Knowledge). In Karmayoga there is predominance of the renouncement of fruit viz., attachment while in the Sāṅkhyayoga there is predominance of the renouncement of egoism. But if a man renounces attachment, his egoism is naturally renounced* and if he renounces egoism, his attachment is naturally renounced.

Link:–The Lord now enumerates these five factors.

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम्।
विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम्॥ १४॥

adhiṣṭhānaṁ tathā kartā karaṇaṁ ca pṛthagvidham
vividhāśca pṛthakceṣṭā daivaṁ caivātra pañcamam

The seat of action (body), the doer (agent), the instruments of various sorts (various senses), many kinds of efforts and providence (destiny) (impression) being the fifth. 14

Comment:

'Adhiṣṭhānam' —This term stands for both the body and the country (earth's surface) in which this body is established.

'Kartā' —All the actions are performed by Prakṛti not by the self. But when a man by ignorance regards the actions as his own, he becomes a doer or an agent.† Such

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* A man (the soul) being a fragment of God has identity with Him. But having disinclinations for Him he has the sense of egoism as "I am worldly, I am intelligent, I am learned" etc. He is attached to this egoism. But if he performs all actions by thinking "Nothing is mine, I need nothing and I have to do nothing for me," his attachment is renounced. As soon as his attachment is renounced, his egoism will also be renounced.

A Karmayogī performs all the actions with his physical, subtle and causal bodies for the welfare of others. With his physical body he works for the welfare of other, with his subtle body he thinks for the welfare of others and with his causal body, his trance is for the welfare of others. By doing so his egoism and attachment are renounced and he attains peace.

The peace which is attained after renouncing the world is a means (Gītā 6/3) while the peace which one attains by God-Realization is the supreme (Gītā 6/15). So if a striver does not enjoy the peace which is a means, he attains to the supreme peace.

† All the actions are performed by Prakṛti, it has been described in the Gītā in several ways—

(1) All actions are performed by the modes of nature (3/27; 13/29).

(2) The modes are acting on the modes (3/28) and when the seer perceives no other agent than the modes (14/19).

(3) The senses act on sense-objects (5/9).

(4) Here in 18/14 five factors are contributory to the accomplishment of actions.

All these statements mean that actions are performed by nature only and not by the self, but a man by identifying himself with nature assumes that he is a doer (3/27). But a wise man realizes that all actions are performed by nature, so he does nothing at all (5/8).

a doer is contributory to the accomplishment of actions.

'Karaṇaṁ ca pṛthagvidham'—There are thirteen instruments (senses)—the hand, the foot, the mouth (organ of voice), anus and genital organ—these five organs of actions and ear, eye, skin, tongue and nose—these five sense-organs—these ten are external instruments or senses while mind, intellect and egoism are the internal instruments.

'Vividhāśca pṛthakceṣṭā' —Various kinds of efforts are made by the above mentioned thirteen senses as hands are used for exchange of things, feet for moving, the organ of voice for speaking, anus for discharging excrement, genital organ for discharging urine, ear for hearing, eye for seeing, skin for touch, tongue for taste, nose for smell, mind for thought, intellect for determination and egoism for pride.

'Daivaṁ caivātra pañcamam'—The fifth factor for the accomplishment of all actions is 'Daiva'. Here the term 'Daiva' Stands for Saṁskāra (Impressions). If a person performs good actions, they leave good impressions. But if he performs bad or evil actions, their impression is bad. Those impressions instigate him to act. Good impressions inspire him to perform good actions while evil impressions instigate him to perform evil actions.

These five factors—body, the doer, instrument, efforts and providence or impressions are contributory to the accomplishment of all actions. No action can be performed without the body which is the base. Without the doer who will perform actions? The actions can be performed by the doer with the help of the senses only. There can't be accomplishment of actions without making efforts. The doer will act according to the impressions that are imprinted on his mind and heart.

Thus these five factors contribute to the accomplishment of all actions.

शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत्कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।
न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः ॥ १५ ॥

śarīravāṅmanobhiryatkarma prārabhate naraḥ
nyāyyaṁ vā viparītaṁ vā pañcaite tasya hetavaḥ

Whatever action a man performs with his body, speech and mind, whether it is right or wrong, these five are its factors. 15

Comment:

'Śarīravāṅmanobhiryatkarma prārabhate naraḥ nyāyyaṁ vā viparītaṁ vā pañcaite tasya hetavaḥ'—The five factors described in the preceding verse have been included in this verse also—as the body stands for 'Adhiṣṭhāna', speech stands for external instrument (sense), mind stands for internal instrument (sense), 'Naraḥ' (Man) stands for the doer and the term 'Prārabhate' (Performs) stands for efforts. As far as 'Daiva' (Impression) is concerned, it also abides in the internal sense but it is not revealed. It is revealed through inclinations and the actions which are performed by inclinations.

Whatever actions a man performs with the predominance of either the body or the speech or the mind, whether it is prescribed or prohibited by the scriptures, these five (mentioned in the preceding verse) are its factors.

All the actions are performed with the body, speech and mind. If they are prohibited, they lead to bondage. So in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth verses of the seventeenth chapter there is description of the penances of the body, speech and mind respectively. It means that if any action is not performed against the scriptures either with the body or speech or mind, it becomes a penance. In the seventeenth verse of the

seventeenth chapter it is mentioned that the penance which is practised without the expectation of reward is called Sāttvika. The Sāttvika penance leads to emancipation while the Rājasika and Tāmasika penances lead to bondage.

The body, speech and mind become impure when a man regards them as his own. By regarding them as his own, he can't realize that he has no connection with actions. So if a striver does not regard them as his own and does not perform any action for himself, they are quickly purified. Therefore, he should renounce his affinity with them either by purifying them through the Discipline of Action or by applying discrimination through the Discipline of Knowledge. As soon as this assumed affinity is renounced, he realizes the self.

A man commits an error that he regards himself as the doer of the actions such as eating, drinking, sitting, standing, sleeping and waking etc. So these actions bind him. But if he does not assume that he is the doer, those actions don't bear fruit for him and he is not bound by them. As actions such as growth from childhood to youth, breathing, digestion etc., are performed by Prakṛti and he does not consider himself their doer, they don't bear virtuous or sinful fruits for him. Similarly when he has no sense of doership, he realizes that all actions are performed by nature alone.

Link:–Having explained the five factors which are contributory to the accomplishment of all actions according to the Sāṅkhya doctrine, the Lord now denounces those who recognize the self as the doer.

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।
पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान्न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥ १६ ॥

tatraivaṁ sati kartāramātmānaṁ kevalaṁ tu yaḥ
paśyatyakṛtabuddhitvānna sa paśyati durmatiḥ

Such being the case, the man of perverse understanding, who, on account of impure (untrained) mind, looks upon his self alone as the doer, does not see at all. 16

Comment:

'Tatraivaṁ sati kartāramātmānaṁ kevalaṁ tu yaḥ paśyatyakṛta-buddhitvānna sa paśyati durmatiḥ'— All the actions are performed by the body, the doer, the instrument, efforts and providence, not by the self. But he who looks upon his self as the doer, his understanding is untrained i.e., he has not attached importance to his discrimination by which he can realize that the sentient self is different from the insentient nature. He is of perverse mind because he has not trained his understanding. If he awakens his discrimination, he can't remain of perverse mind.

The two terms 'Akṛtabuddhitvāt' and 'Durmatiḥ' seemingly having the same meaning, have some difference. The former term denotes the cause why the doer is 'Durmati'. (of perverse understanding), while the term 'Durmatiḥ' is adjective for the doer. The doer is of perverse understanding because he has not developed and refined his discriminative faculty. Had he developed it, he could have not been called a man of perverse understanding.

The self does nothing (Gītā 13/31). But when the man identifies himself with the body because of his perverse mind, he does not realize that he is not the doer.

The term 'Kevalam' (Merely or only) has been used both in the Disciplines of Action as well as Knowledge. In the Discipline of Action, all the actions are performed merely with the body, senses, mind and intellect

and the striver is not attached to those actions (Gītā 5/11). So he realizes that all of them have their identity with the world. By realizing this fact he realizes that he is established in the self.

In the Sānkhya doctrine (Discipline of Knowledge) there is predominance of knowledge or discrimination. Such a striver realizes that all actions are accomplished by these five factors, not by the self. But the person whose mind is deluded by egoism considers himself to be the doer. When his delusion is renounced, he realizes that he (the self) is not the doer at all. So the term 'alone' has been used with the self.

Here a point needs special attention. In the Discipline of Action the term 'Kevalam' has been used with the body, mind and intellect to denote that all of them including ego will be used for the service of the universe and then the self will remain as it is. But in the Discipline of Knowledge the term 'Kevalam' has been used with the self which denotes that the self is absolutely pure, 'immutable, enlightened and unattached. But in this case there remains egoism in its subtle form. But after some time it melts and merges in nature.

Link:–In the preceding verse it has been mentioned that he who looks upon his self as the doer, does not see at all. Now the Lord in the next verse explains who really sees:

यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।
हत्वापि स इमाँल्लोकान्न हन्ति न निबध्यते ।। १७ ।।

yasya nāhaṁkṛto bhāvo buddhiryasya na lipyate
hatvāpi sa imāँllokānna hanti na nibadhyate

He who is free from the egoistic notion, whose intellect is not tainted, though he slays all these creatures, he slays not, nor is he bound (by actions). 17

Comment:

'Yasya nāhaṁkṛto bhāvo buddhir-yasya na lipyate'—'I am a doer'—he is free from this egostic notion and 'I shall reap the fruit—his intellect is not tainted by this selfishness. As all actions are performed in the light but the light is not the doer, similarly the self is merely the silent witness of all activities. Thus a striver realizes that he is not the doer. Similarly he has no desire of his own i.e., he is free from the pairs of opposites that it should happen and it should not happen, it means that his intellect is not tainted. Such a striver remains neither a doer nor an enjoyer, and he realizes this fact.

The nature does everything and it always undergoes modifications while the self is its illuminator. By knowing this fact a striver remains established in the self. He does not regard himself as the doer. When he is free from this egoistic notion, his intellect is not tainted to reap the fruit of actions.

Egoism is an assumption. This assumption is made by the embodied soul himself. It is he (himself) who assumes the sense of doership or denies the sense of doership.

'Hatvāpi sa imāँllokānna hanti na nibadhyate' —Though he slays all beings all at once, yet he does not slay because he has no egoistic notion; and he is not bound because he has no notion of enjoyership. It means that he is attached neither to actions nor to their fruits. Action and fruits are within the sphere of Nature. But due to not realizing this fact, the embodied soul assumes doership and enjoyership in himself. When an action is performed with the sense of doership, then the three factors namely the doer, the organ and the activity are contributory to the accomplishment of an action. In the absence of doership all actions are converted into inaction. But with the sense of doership

any activity converts into an action. When the sense of doership is extinct, then the cosmic soul (God) Who is the base and illuminator of all remains. So he can neither kill nor be bound (Gītā 2/19).

He slays all beings—what does it mean? It means that a man who performs his duty according to his caste (social order) and stage of life, being free from the egoistic notion, with his untainted intellect, incurs no sin. For example a liberated soul belonging to the warrior class, while slaying the warriors on the battle-field, neither slays nor is he bound because he is free from egoism and selfishness.

Here is the context of war. So by using the term 'Hatvāpi' (even having slain), the Lord inspires Arjuna to wage the war. The term 'Api' (Even) denotes —"Such a man does nothing at all, though he may be ever engaged in action" (Gītā 4/20), "Being engaged in all forms of activities, he dwells in the Lord" (Gītā 6/31), "The Supreme self though dwells in the body, it neither acts nor is tainted" (Gītā 13/31). It means that the Self remains uniform and fixed whether a man is engaged in actions or he does not act. The reason is that it is the nature which performs all actions.

A man (soul) has his identity with God but it is because of his egoistic notion that he becomes separate from the Lord. Actually he is neither a doer nor an enjoyer but by identifying himself with the body he accepts the egoistic notion and thus he becomes a doer and an enjoyer.

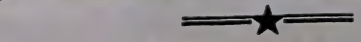
This egoism is of two kinds. 'Ahaṁsphūrti' and 'Ahaṁkṛti'. A man awakes from sound sleep and he realizes that he exists. This is one kind of egoism which is called 'Ahaṁsphūrti'. But then by identifying himself with the body he assumes that he belongs to a particular caste, creed and social order etc., this is his affinity with the unreal. With this sort of affinity (identification) with the unreal (body) he regards the actions done by the body as the actions done by the self. This is second kind of egoism called 'Ahaṁkṛti'.

There is limitedness in the self due to ego. Even in 'Ahaṁsphūrti' as mentioned above, individualism remains. But it does not bind. When he accepts 'Ahaṁkṛti' viz., he assumes relationship with some one or something or some action, the dualism of virtue and vice springs in the embodied soul which induces him to perform good and bad actions. On Self-Realization the limitedness in 'Ahaṁsphūrti' is burnt (destroyed). In such a state actions are done by that liberated soul in an impersonal state. They do not bind him.

'Na hanti na nibadhyate'—He neither slays nor is he bound—What does it mean? There are two states of steadiness – temporary and permanent. The temporary state is called 'Nirvikalpa-Avasthā' while the permanent one is called 'Nirvikalpa-Bodha'. The former does not remain uniform, it undergoes changes. It can be attained through practice. By remaining detached from the 'Nirvikalpa-Avasthā' the self evident 'Nirvikalpa-Bodha' is realized. The latter remains ever uniform without undergoing any change and it can't be attained through practice. In this state while slaying all beings a man neither slays nor is bound.

How should a man be free from the egoistic notion and how should his intellect not be tainted ?

A man by applying his discrimination should realize the fact that all actions are performed by the nature alone which always undergoes modifications. Moreover all the actions as well as their fruits appear and disappear while the self as the illuminator of all of them ever remains uniform. By realizing this fact he can be free from the egoistic notion and his intellect is not tainted.



Link:–Knowledge and actions in themselves are not evils. It is the sense of doership which is an evil. The sense of doership causes actions–this is explained in the verse that follows:–

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना ।
करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः ॥ १८ ॥

jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ parijñātā trividhā karmacodanā
karaṇaṁ karma karteti trividhaḥ karmasaṁgrahaḥ

Knowledge, the knowable and the knower form the threefold incitement (incentive) to action; and the instrument, the action and the agent (doer) are the three-fold constitutents (basis) of action. 18

Comment:

[In the fourteenth verse of this chapter the Lord explained the body, the doer, the instruments, efforts and providence (impressions), these five factors, for the accomplishment of all actions. Out of these the most important one is the doer. So the Lord vehemently criticized the man who looks upon his self as the doer in the sixteenth verse while He praised the man who is free from the egoistic notion in the seventeenth verse. The Lord in the eighteenth verse clarifies that it is the notion of egoism (doership) which binds a man.]

'Jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ parijñātā trividhā karmacodanā'— Knowledge, the knowable and the knower are the threefold incitement to action. Knowledge has been mentioned first of all because it is knowledge which motivates a man to action. As a man first knows that he is thirsty—this is knowledge; and then how he should quench his thirst. It is water which can quench the thirst. So water is 'knowable', He who knows is the knower. But all the three– knowledge, the knowable and the knower, together motivate a man to action. If there is absence of any one of the three, the remaining two can't contribute to action.

He who knows the motivation of action is called 'Parijñātā' (Knower only). In this 'Parijñātā' the sense of doership and the sense of getting anything for himself are quite absent. He knows only inspiration (Sphuraṇā) of actions. There can be the motivation to do an action only in a particular individual. In respect of different activities such as eating, drinking, sleeping, hearing etc., the doer of these different activities can be designated as eater, drinker, sleeper, hearer etc. But the knower of all of them will be designated by the term 'Parijñātā.'

'Karaṇaṁ karma karteti trividhaḥ karmasaṁgrahaḥ'—The instrument, the activity and the agent are the threefold constitutents of action. It is the conjunction of these three which produces an action. The means such as mind, intellect and senses etc., by which he performs actions are known 'Karaṇa' (Instruments). The acts of eating, drinking, sitting, walking, coming and going etc., are 'Karma' (Activities). The person, who having affinity with instruments and activities, performs actions is called a 'Kartā' (Doer). These three are the constitutents of action. Here the Lord wants to emphasize the fact that it is the sense of doership which binds a man. Out of the three constituents of action, the organ (instrument) does not contribute to the accomplishment of action as it is subservient to the doer. Only that activity which a doer wants to do, is performed by him. Therefore an activity is also not an important contributory factor. According to the branch of learning known by the name 'Sāṅkhya' it is the sense of doership which is the chief contributory factor to action. In the absence of the sense of doership no action is accomplished. The terms 'Karaṇa' and 'Karma' have been used before while the term 'Kartā' has been used near the term 'Karma saṁgrahaḥ' by the Lord in order to bring home the fact that it is the sense of doership which gets a man in bondage. If he performs an action without the notion of doership he is not bound because he does not desire for its fruit. So the Lord has used the term 'Kartā' (Doer) near expression 'Karma-saṁgrahaḥ' (Constituents of action).

Link:–Now the Lord from the next verse classifies them into three kinds so that a striver by knowing them may transcend the three modes of nature.

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुणभेदतः ।
प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने यथावच्छृणु तान्यपि ॥ १९ ॥

jñānaṁ karma ca kartā ca tridhaiva guṇabhedataḥ
procyate guṇasaṅkhyāne yathāvacchṛṇu tānyapi

Knowledge, action and the agent are declared, in the science of modes, (Sāṅkhya philosophy) to be of three kinds only, according to difference in the modes. Hear thou duly of these also. 19

Comment:

'Procyate guṇasaṅkhyāne' — The Lord is explaining to Arjuna the three kinds of knowledge, action and agent as declared in the science of modes (Sāṅkhya philosophy) according to difference in the modes.

'Jñānaṁ karma ca kartā ca tridhaiva guṇabhedataḥ'— In the preceding verse the Lord explained the threefold incitement to action and the threefold constituents of action. Thus he explained six factors*. Out of them the Lord first discusses the three—knowledge from the threefold incitement while the action and the agent from the threefold constituents. Any person begins an action after possessing knowledge about it. So knowledge has been taken first. In the performance of an action an agent occupies an important place but action has also been taken with it because without action, he can't accomplish (execute) an action. It means that knowledge occupies an important place as an incentive to action while the actions and the agent are significant so far as the execution of the action is concerned. If these three are Sāttvika (Good), a man is not bound. If they are Rājasika (Passionate) or Tāmasika (Ignorant) a man is bound.

Now the question arises why the knowable and the knower have not been taken from the threefold incitement. The reason is that the knower becomes an agent when he establishes his affinity with an action. So within the three kinds of agents, the three kinds of knowers are included. Moreover a knower is of three kinds only when he is attached to the modes of nature. If he is not attached to them, he remains merely a knower without having three kinds.

The knowable or the object to be known is 'Jñeya'. There are different objects to be known but the aim of knowing these objects is to derive happiness. So the Lord has divided the knowable by the name of happiness into three kinds further (in 18/36-39).

Similarly the Lord has not divided the instruments such as senses and mind etc., into three kinds. Whatever actions are performed with senses etc., a man performs them by applying his intellect. So the Lord divides the instruments by the name of intellect further (in 18/30-32).

Firmness (steadiness) is necessary with intellect in the Discipline of Knowledge. So the Lord in the Discipline of Knowledge has used firmness with intellect (6/25, 18/51). He has also divided it into three kinds (18/33-35).

The term 'Tridhaiva' denotes that there are only three kinds, neither more nor less than the three because the three modes of goodness (Sattva), passion (Rajas) and ignorance (Tamas) are born of nature (Gītā 14/5). So because of these three modes they are of three kinds.

'Yathāvat'—As it has been described

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* Knowledge, the knowable and the knower—the threefold incitement is subtle material while the instrument, the action and the agent—the threefold constituents of action are gross materials.

in the branch of knowledge dealing with Guṇas, He is telling him the same without any addition or substraction.

'Śṛṇu'—Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to hear the topic attentively because out of the three the Sāttvika one enables a man to realize God by breaking up his affinity with actions, while the Rājasika one leads to the bondage of birth and death and the Tāmasika one is conducive to degradation, viz., hells and eighty-four lac forms of lives. So he should adopt the Sāttvika one and abandon the Rājasika and Tāmasika ones.

'Tāni'—The agent, action and knowledge have no connection with the self. The self is ever pure and detached.

'Api'—It is indispensable to know these three kinds because by knowing them in the right perspective a man can realize the fact enumerated in (18/17). 'He who is free from the egoistic notion, whose intellect is not tainted, though he slays the people, he slays not, nor is he bound (by actions)' i.e., he realizes the self.

Link:–The Lord now begins to describe the Sāttvika Knowledge (knowledge of goodness).

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते ।
अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥ २० ॥

sarvabhūteṣu yenaikaṁ bhāvamavyayamīkṣate
avibhaktaṁ vibhakteṣu tajjñānaṁ viddhi sāttvikam

The knowledge by which one sees the Imperishable Being (Reality) in all beings, undivided in the divided (not separate in all the separate beings) know that knowledge to be Sāttvika (of goodness). 20

Comment:

'Sarvabhūteṣu yenaikaṁ bhāvamavyayamīkṣate avibhaktaṁ vibhakteṣu' —All beings and things etc., are kaleidoscopic, they have no existence of their own. But they seem to exist in the light of the Imperishable Lord Who pervades everywhere. A man out of ignorance sees their existence. As soon as his ignorance is removed and he gains knowledge, he realizes the existence of God in all the perishable beings and things etc.

Having gained knowledge a striver sees the imperishable Supreme Lord abiding equally in all the perishable beings (Gītā 13/27). Though He is undivided, yet He seems to be divided among beings, things, circumstances and incidents etc. (Gītā 13/16). A striver beholds only the imperishable essence in all the objects whichever undergo changes. How to know that he sees only the Lord? He remains free from attachment and aversion. This is the criterion.

'Tajjñānaṁ viddhi sāttvikam'—This knowledge is known to be Sāttvika. This knowledge is called Sāttvika because of the affinity with things and inclinations etc. If this affinity is renounced this knowledge is Self-Realization which ought to be known as declared by Lord Kṛṣṇa. He declares," I will describe that which ought to be known and knowing which one attains immortality" (Gītā 13/12).

A Vital Fact

The universe is known by senses, senses are known by intellect and intellect is known by 'I'. The universe, the senses and the intellect are known by 'I'. But there is one Illuminator Who illuminates this 'I' also. That Illuminator is all pervasive and infinite while 'I' is limited and finite. 'You' (thou), 'this' and 'that' are also illumined in that light as 'I' is illumined. That Illuminator is not subject to illumination. That is Illumination-Incarnate. He is attributeless, the Absolute. He is undivided and He illuminates everything. His illumination in a

particular person is called Sāttvika knowledge.

In other words the Sāttvika knowledge can be explained in this way. All the beings are included in 'I', 'you', 'this' and 'that'. They are diverse but He who illumines them is indivisible. They ever undergo changes and are not real but He ever remains uniform. All the four 'I', 'you', 'this', and 'that' are not really existent in that Illuminator. But they get their seeming existence by that Illuminator only. That Illuminator illumines all and Himself is the embodiment of illumination. They are separate (divided) while He as their illuminator remains undivided. This is Sāttvika knowledge. Being pure and illuminating, this knowledge illumines all divisible, changeable and perishable beings and objects (Gītā 14/6).

In fact this Sāttvika knowledge is the illuminator because of its affinity with the object illuminated and is indivisible because of its affinity with the divisible, otherwise it is attributeless absolute 'Real knowledge.'

Link:–The Lord now describes the Rājasika knowledge (knowledge of the nature of passion).

पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ज्ञानं नानाभावान्पृथग्विधान्।
वेत्ति सर्वेषु भूतेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि राजसम्॥ २१॥

pṛthaktvena tu yajjñānaṁ nānābhāvānpṛthagvidhān
vetti sarveṣu bhūteṣu tajjñānaṁ viddhi rājasam

The knowledge by which one sees the manifold entities of different kinds as varying from one another, know that knowledge to be Rājasika (of the nature of passion). 21

Comment:

'Pṛthaktvena tu* yajjñānaṁ nānābhāvānpṛthagvidhān'—There is predominance of passion in the Rājasika knowledge. The Lord declares, "Know thou Rajas to be of the nature of passion" (Gītā 14/7). This passion causes attachment and aversion. It is because of this passionate knowledge that a man sees diversity in different persons, gods, devils, demons, birds, beasts, moths, insects, trees and plants etc., according to their shapes, natures, names, forms and attributes etc. He loses the perception of unity and does not see the Imperishable Supreme Lord abiding equally in all the perishable beings in the form of the imperishable soul.

'Vetti sarveṣu bhūteṣu tajjñānaṁ viddhi rājasam'—The knowledge by which one sees the manifold entities of different kinds as varying from one another according to their different bodies, senses, inner sense, temperaments and life-breaths etc., that knowledge is Rājasika. A man possessing Rājasika knowledge can't discriminate between the sentient and the insentient.

Link:–Now the Lord describes the Tāmasika knowledge (the knowledge of the mode of ignorance).

यत्तु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन्कार्ये सक्तमहैतुकम्।
अतत्त्वार्थवदल्पं च तत्तामसमुदाहृतम्॥ २२॥

yattu kṛtsnavadekasminkārye saktamahaitukam
atattvārthavadalpaṁ ca tattāmasamudāhṛtam

* The term 'Tu' (but has been used to denote that the Rājasika knowledge is different from the Sāttvika one.

But that which clings to one single body as if it were the whole, which is without reason, without foundation in truth and is trivial, is declared to be Tāmasika (of the mode of ignorance). 22

Comment:

'Yattu* kṛtsnavadekasminkārye saktam'—A Tāmasika person regards the perishable body consisting of five gross elements as his own Self. He thinks that first he was a child, now he is young and then he will grow old. He holds that he is the enjoyer, he is successful, mighty and happy and there is no one else like him. He is entangled in the meshes of delusion (16/15).

'Ahaitukam'—His knowledge is irrational and it is against the scriptures. He does not realize that he (the soul) is imperishable and uniform while the body is kaleidoscopic and perishable. He identifies the soul with the body.

'Atattvārthavadalpam ca' —Such a person does not know the truth that the soul is different from the body. His knowledge is very poor and insignificant. So the Lord has not used the term 'Knowledge' in this verse. A Tāmasika person lacks knowledge, he is ignorant. So the Lord instead of using the term 'Knowledge' has used the terms 'Yat' (Which) and 'Tat' (That) only.

'Tattāmasamudāhṛtam' —That which is without reason, without foundation in truth and is trivial. is declared to be Tāmasika.

If Tāmasika knowledge is not knowledge at all, and the Lord hesitates in calling it knowledge why has it been described? The reason is that the Lord in the nineteenth verse of this chapter asked Arjuna to hear three kinds of knowledge, action and agent. So after describing the Sāttvika and Rājasika knowledge it was necessary for Him to describe it also.

Link:–Now the Lord describes the Sāttvika action (action of goodness).

नियतं सङ्गरहितमरागद्वेषतः कृतम् ।
अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत्तत्सात्त्विकमुच्यते ॥ २३ ॥

niyatam saṅgarahitamarāgadveṣataḥ kṛtam
aphalaprepsunā karma yattatsāttvikamucyate

An action which is ordained by the scriptures, which is performed without the sense of doership and without attachment, or aversion by one who seeks no reward, that is said to be Sāttvika (of the nature of goodness). 23

Comment:

'Niyatam saṅgarahitamarāga-dveṣataḥ kṛtam aphalaprepsunā karma yattatsāttvikamucyate' —The acts ordained by the scriptures according to a person's caste, (social order), stage of life (Āśrama) and circumstances are 'Niyata'.

Here the term 'Niyatam' denotes that the actions mentioned above are to be performed but the actions that are prohibited by the scriptures should not be performed.

Here the expression 'Sangarahitam' denotes freedom from the sense of doership. As the trees have no sense of doership when new leaves sprout and when they blossom, similarly in the bodies the different activities such as digestion, development and decay etc., take place naturally. So by realizing this fact a striver becomes free from doership. Here the expression 'Saṅga-

* The Parcticle 'Tu' here conveys that the Tāmasika knowledge is different from the Rājasika knowledge.

rahitam' denotes freedom from doership because freedom from attachment has already been mentioned (in 18/9)* and the term 'Arāga' in this verse also denotes it.

The expression 'Arāgadveṣataḥ kṛtam' means that an action should be performed being free from attachment and aversion viz., an action should neither be performed with attachment nor renounced with aversion. Moreover there should not be attachment or aversion to the instruments (body, senses and mind etc.) for performing actions.

The expression 'Arāgadveṣataḥ' denotes freedom from attachment at present while the term 'Aphalaprepsunā' denotes lack of attachment in future. It means that an action should be performed, without any desire for fruit in future and there should be detachment from action and objects. It has already been mentioned that an action should be performed without having either attachment or aversion. Now He declares that it is to be performed without attachment in future i.e., without seeking any reward. Such an action is declared to be Sāttvika. It is called Sāttvika so long as it is connected with Prakṛti (Nature) in a very subtle form. When its connection is completely renounced, this action becomes inaction.

Link:–Now He describes the Rājasika action (action of the nature of passion).

यत्तु कामेप्सुना कर्म साहंकारेण वा पुनः ।
क्रियते बहुलायासं तद्राजसमुदाहृतम् ॥ २४ ॥

yattu kāmepsunā karma sāhaṅkāreṇa vā punaḥ
kriyate bahulāyāsaṁ tadrājasamudāhṛtam

But the action which is performed with great strain by one who seeks to gratify his desires or is impelled by self-sense (egoism)—that is declared to be Rājasika (Passionate). 24

Comment:

'Yattu† kāmepsunā karma'—A passionate person performs an action in order to seek comfort, pleasure, honour and praise etc.

'Sāhaṅkāreṇa'— He feels boastful of his actions in public when people praise him, and in privacy by thinking that he is more prompt, sincere and honest in actions than other people. Thus the action performed with the egoistic feeling is called 'Rajas'.

'Vā punaḥ' —The expression 'Vā punaḥ' (Or again) has been used to denote that the action either performed for fruit (reward) or again by egoism becomes Rājasika. So if it is performed both for fruit and impelled by egoism, it surely becomes Rājasika.

'Kriyate bahulāyāsam' —While performing an action a man has to make effort and feel strain. But the man who hankers after physical comforts feels greater strain. On the other hand the man who hankers after pleasures and prosperity does not feel much strain because he has a yearning for accumulating wealth and enjoying pleasures and so instead of physical rest he has an eye on prosperity and pleasures.

A Rājasika person while performing an action in public does not feel great strain because his sense of egoism is satisfied. But when he performs an action in loneliness he feels much strain because his sense of egoism is not satisfied and he is ease loving.

'Tadrājasamudāhṛtam' —The action performed by a person longing for fruit with egoism and with much strain is declared to be Rājasika.

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* Here in 'Sānkhyayoga' the expression 'Sangarahitam' denotes freedom from doership while in 'Karmayoga' the expression 'Sangam tyaktvā phalam caiva' (18/9) denotes freedom from attachment as well as from desire for fruit. It means that if a Sānkhya-yogī has the sense of doership, his affinity with the body will continue which is an obstacle to the Self-Realization. But if a Karmayogī has the sense of doership, it is not such an obstacle for him because he acts for others and he has the sense of doership only when he performs actions. When the action is accomplished, his doership merges in the action.

† The term 'Tu' (But) has been used to denote that the Rājasika action is different from the Sāttvika one.

Link:–Now the Lord describes the Tāmasika action (action of the mode of ignorance).

अनुबन्धं क्षयं हिंसामनवेक्ष्य च पौरुषम्।
मोहादारभ्यते कर्म यत्तत्तामसमुच्यते ॥ २५ ॥

anubandhaṁ kṣayaṁ hiṁsāmanavekṣya ca pauruṣam
mohādārabhyate karma yattattāmasamucyate

The action which is undertaken from delusion, without regard to consequences or to loss, injury and one's own capacity, is declared to be Tāmasika. 25

Comment:

'Anubandham'—The person who performs an action for its fruit performs it well thoughtfully in order to reap its fruit. But a Tāmasika person undertakes an action without foreseeing its consequences for himself and for others.

'Kṣayam'—He does not think of the loss of health, wealth, time, honour, fame, praise and ruin here or hereafter, resulting from the performance of an action.

'Hiṁsām'—He does not foresee to what extent it will cause injury to human beings and other creatures and also involve destruction. Moreover it will pollute the mind, morals and feelings etc., of beings and will degrade and ruin them.

'Anavekṣya ca pauruṣam' —He does not consider whether he possesses the requisite ability (or capacity), time, skill, knowledge, and resources etc., or not to perform an act.

'Mohādārabhyate karma yattattāmasamucyate'—A Tāmasika person performs an action out of delusion without thinking of its consequences or loss or injury or his own capacity. Such an action is declared to be Tāmasika.

Link:–Now the Lord enumerates the characteristics of a Sāttvika doer (agent).

मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योर्निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥ २६ ॥

muktasaṅgo'nahaṁvādī dhṛtyutsāhasamanvitaḥ
siddhyasiddhyomirvikāraḥ kartā sāttvika ucyate

The doer who is free from attachment, who is non-egoistic, who is endowed with firmness and zeal and who is unaffected by success and failure, is called Sāttvika (of the nature of goodness). 26

Comment:

'Muktasaṅgaḥ' —As a Sāṅkhyayogī is free from attachment so is a Sāttvika doer, free from attachment, desire, lust, necessities and the sense of mine for objects, persons and incidents and circumstances etc. A Sāttvika doer remains completely detached.

'Anahaṁvādī' —He is free from the sense of doership and so he never boasts of his actions like men possessing a demoniac disposition. He is not proud even of his equanimity or freedom from attachment to the world.

'Dhṛtyutsāhasamanvitaḥ'—A Sāttvika doer is endowed with firmness and enthusiasm. A man possessing firmness performs his duty without being disturbed by odds, difficulties, obstacles and blame etc., while a man endowed with enthusiasm discharges his duty with zeal equally in success and failure, in honour and dishonour in praise and blame etc. Thus a Sāttvika doer remains endowed with firmness and zeal.

'Siddhyasiddhyornirvikāraḥ'— A

Sāttvika doer remains unaffected in success and failure. He neither feels elevated when an action is accomplished easily nor does he feel dejected if it is not accomplished in spite of the best efforts. He remains equanimous in success and failure.

'Kartā sāttvika ucyate' —Such an agent who is free from attachment, who is non-egoistic, who is endowed with firmness and zeal and who is unswayed by success and failure, is called Sāttvika.

In this verse there are six characteristics—attachment, egoism, firmness, zeal, success and failure. A Sāttvika doer is free from the first two, he is endowed with the middle two and he remains equanimous in the last two.

Link:–Now the Lord enumerates the characteristics of a Rājasika doer (passionate agent).

रागी कर्मफलप्रेप्सुर्लुब्धो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः ।
हर्षशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ २७ ॥

rāgī karmaphalaprepsurlubdho himsātmako'śuciḥ
harṣaśokānvitaḥ kartā rājasaḥ parikīrtitaḥ

The doer who is passionate, who eagerly seeks the fruit of actions, who is greedy, oppressive by nature, impure, who is moved by joy and sorrow—such an agent is said to be Rājasika (passionate). 27

Comment:

'Rāgī'—The first characteristic of a passionate agent is passion or attachment. A Rājasika doer remains attached to actions and their fruits as well as to persons, things and objects etc.

'Karmaphalaprepsuḥ'—A Rājasika person performs actions to seek their fruit. He offers charity in order to gain honour and praise here and heavenly pleasures hereafter. Similarly he takes medicines in order to keep the body fit and healthy.

'Lubdhaḥ'—A Rājasika person is not satisfied with his possessions. He goes on craving for honour, praise, fame, wealth, sons, and family etc. The more he receives the more he yearns.

'Himsātmakaḥ'—He possesses an oppressive nature. He inflicts sufferings on others for his selfish motive. The more pleasures he enjoys, the more pain he inflicts on those who suffer shortage. Enjoyment of sense-objects without caring for the miseries of others is violence. Without violence no enjoyment is possible.

When the Lord declared that Tāmasa action (18/25) and Tāmasa doer—both are oppressive, He means to explain that the actions by a Tāmasa agent are not performed with discrimination because of delusion. So he is oppressive during his daily common life. A Rājasa person enjoys mundane pleasures, then other people who suffer shortage have a burning sensation in their hearts after seeing him enjoying those pleasures. It means that a Tāmasa person does injury to others through his actions while a Rājasa person himself is oppressive.

'Aśuciḥ'—A passionate person makes the things and objects, which he amasses for his enjoyment, impure. He pollutes the environment. The clothes which he wears become impure. So no one wants to use the clothes of the person who is attached to them after his death. A man can't concentrate his mind on God at such a place where the dead body of such a man is cremated. If any person sleeps there, he has bad and horrible dreams. This passion or attachment to the perishable makes the body or even the bones impure.

'Harṣaśokānvitaḥ'— He is ever entangled in pleasures and pain, attachment and aversion etc., because of success and failure and pleasant and unpleasant, desirable and undesirable incidents and circumstances etc.

'Kartā rājasaḥ parikīrtitaḥ'—The agent who possesses the above mentioned characteristics is called passionate.

Link:–Now the Lord enumerates the characteristics of a Tāmasika doer.

अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठोऽनैष्कृतिकोऽलसः ।
विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥ २८ ॥

ayuktaḥ prākṛtaḥ stabdhaḥ śaṭho'naiṣkṛtiko'lasaḥ
viṣādī dīrghasūtrī ca kartā tāmasa ucyate

The doer who is unsteady, (unbalanced) vulgar, arrogant, obstinate, malicious, indolent, despondent and procrastinating, he is said to be Tāmasika (of the mode of ignorance). 28

Comment:

'Ayuktaḥ'—Tāmasa (mode of ignorance) deludes all embodied beings (Gītā 14/8). A Tāmasika person can't discriminate between the proper and the improper and between what should be done and what should be refrained from.

'Prākṛtaḥ'—Prākṛtaḥ or vulgar is he who has not improved his life through good education, scriptures and good company etc. He possesses a childish nature, having no sense of duty.

'Stabdhaḥ'—An (arrogant) man remains unbending with his mind, speech and body. He does not bow down to elderly people, parents, teachers etc. He is hard-hearted by nature, having no element of gentleness and humility.

'Śaṭhaḥ' —A Tāmasika person out of obstinacy does not follow the good advice and good ideas of other people. He out of delusion holds that his own ideas are good and he sticks to them.

'Anaiṣkṛtikaḥ'—A Tāmasika person does not return good for the good done to him. He rather returns an evil for the good.

'Alasaḥ'—An indolent man does not perform his duty. He wants to lie down or to sleep or to remain idle.

'Viṣādī'—Such a despondent man grieves day and night and his worries, disquietude and sadness know no end automatically because he has no sense of duty.

'Dīrghasūtrī'—A procrastinating person does not think how to perform an action more promptly and thoroughly. He takes a lot of time in completing the work which should have been done in a very short time. Moreover he does not complete it thoroughly.

'Kartā tāmasa ucyate'—An agent who possesses the above mentioned eight characteristics is said to be Tāmasika.

An Important Fact

In the twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth verses the Lord has enumerated the characteristics of agents. As is an agent, so are his actions and so are the instruments to perform those actions. So the Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika agents perform the same kinds of actions.

A Sāttvika agent, by making his actions and intellect etc. Sāttvika, by rejoicing the Sāttvika happiness, identifies himself with God i.e., reaches the end of sorrow (Gītā 18/36). The reason is that the aim of a Sāttvika agent is God-Realization. So being free from the sense of doership and enjoyership, he identifies himself with God, because actually he had his identity with Him. A Rājasika or a Tāmasika doer cannot identify himself with God because he is engrossed in Rājasika or Tāmasika pleasures and his aim is not God-Realization.

Now a doubt arises that an agent can be Sāttvika. But how are actions Sāttvika? The explanation is that when an agent performs an action without having attachrnent to it, without the sense of doership and without expecting any reward, the action becomes Sāttvika. Such a Sāttvika action does good to the doer as well as to the entire universe. It makes the persons, things, objects, environment to which it is connected pure (Gītā 14/6).

Secondly Patañjali holds Rajoguṇa (the mode of passion) to be of the nature of activity (Yogadarśana 2/18) while in the Gītā it is predominantly declared to be of the nature of passion (14/7). In fact it is not activity but passion (attachment) which binds.

In the Gītā actions are declared to be of three kinds—Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika (18/23-25) according to the feelings of the agent. The actions of Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika agents are Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika respectively. So the Lord has not considered only an activity to be Rājasika.

Link:–All actions are accomplished by intellect (understanding) and firmness (steadiness). So the Lord now classifies them.

बुद्धेर्भेदं धृतेश्चैव गुणतस्त्रिविधं शृणु ।
प्रोच्यमानमशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनञ्जय ॥ २९ ॥

buddherbhedaṁ dhṛteścaiva guṇatastrividhaṁ śṛṇu
procyamānamaśeṣeṇa pṛthaktvena dhanañjaya

Hear now the threefold distinction of understanding and also of firmness, O winner of wealth (Arjuna) according to the modes, as I declare them fully and distinctly. 29

Comment:

[In the eighteenth verse of this chapter the instrument, the action and the agent have been declared to be the threefold constituents of action. Out of the instruments, the senses are not divided into the three kinds. Intellect (understanding) predominates the senses and it guides them. So the Lord gives the threefold distinction of understanding as the three kinds of instrument. It is firmness which does not let a man deviate from his aim. When understanding remains firm to achieve the aim, the aim is achieved. So besides intellect, firmness has also been divided into three kinds.*

In the context of the incitement and constituents of action for the striver knowledge, the action and the agent play a very important role. Similarly in order to follow the spiritual discipline and to transcend the three modes of nature, it is indispensable for him to know the three kinds of understanding and firmness so that he may rise high by cultivating the Sāttvika understanding and firmness and give up the Rājasika and Tāmasika ones.]

'Dhanañjaya'—When the Pāṇḍavas performed the sacrifice named Rājasūya, Arjuna took away fabulous wealth by getting victory over several kings. So Arjuna is called 'Dhanañjaya' (Winner of wealth). Here Lord Kṛṣṇa explains to Arjuna that real wealth consists in transcending the three modes of nature by cultivating Sāttvika intellect and firmness. So he should justify his name by possessing this real wealth.

'Buddherbhedaṁ dhṛteścaiva guṇatastrividhaṁ śṛṇu'—The Lord declares that though intellect is one and firmness is also one, yet according to the predominance of characteristics, they have been classified into three kinds—Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika. He asks Arjuna to hear attentively as He is going to explain them fully and distinctly to him.

By using the term 'Caiva' (And also) the Lord declares that he will explain the three-fold distinction of understanding and also of firmness. Though firmness seems to be

* Intellect and firmness play an important role not only in Sāṅkhyayoga (the Discipline of Knowledge) but in other means of God-Realization also. So in the Gītā intellect and firmness have been mentioned together such as 'Let him gain tranquillity little by, little by means of intellect controlled by firmness' (6/25) and 'Endowed with a pure intellect, controlling the self by firmness' (18/51).

a characteristic of intellect, yet it is different as well as important. It is because of firmness that an agent can make the right use of his understanding. If firmness is Sāttvika, a striver's understanding will remain firm. So in the spiritual discipline there is not so much need of the steadiness of mind as is of the steadiness of understanding (intellect). The steadiness of mind is required in accomplishments (Siddhis) such as Aṇimā etc. But in the spiritual progress it is indispensable for understanding to hold firm to its aim*. When a striver's intellect and firmness— both are Sāttvika he will follow the spiritual discipline firmly. So it is necessary for him to know their threefold distinction.

'Pṛthaktvena'—He will explain the distinction of intellect and of firmness distinctly.

'Procyamānamaśeṣeṇa'— Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that He will explain all the important points about intellect and firmness fully so that nothing else may remain to be known.

Link:–The Lord defines the Sāttvika intellect.

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्याकार्ये भयाभये ।
बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥ ३० ॥

pravṛttiṁ ca nivṛttiṁ ca kāryākārye bhayābhaye.
bandhaṁ mokṣaṁ ca yā vetti buddhiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī

The intellect which knows the path of work and renunciation, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation—that intellect is Sāttvika (of the nature of goodness), O Pārtha (Arjuna). 30

Comment:

'Pravṛttiṁ ca nivṛttiṁ ca'— Sometimes a striver is engaged in work while at another time he is engaged in adoration and meditation by renouncing actions. His performance of actions and adoration or meditation with the desire for fruit is included in work.† But if they are performed without the desire for fruit, both are included in renunciation and they lead to God-Realization. So while peforming an action and while renouncing an action a striver should expect no reward. If both of them are performed to derive pleasure or joy out of them they are included in work and lead to bondage. In other words in both the cases individuality persists, it does not get extinct. But if they are performed for the good of others, both are included in renunciation. In both individuality gets extinct. So a striver should follow the path of renunciation for Self-Realization or he should follow the path of work (Action) by serving all beings in order to realize God, the illumination of the two—the path of work and that of renunciation.

'Kāryākārye'—The work which is done according to the ordinance of the scriptures, consistent with one's caste (Vaṃa) and social order (Āśrama) is what ought to be done while the work which is prohibited by the scriptures is which ought not to be done.

The work which is obligatory and which is within our power (capacity) and which leads beings to salvation, is called duty and it ought to be done. But the work which ought not to be done and which leads to bondage is not

* By intellect a striver decides his aim and he holds firm to it through firmness. If even the vilest sinner firmly follows his aim that he has to realize God, all his sins perish and he becomes righteous (Gītā 9/30).

† When a person devotes his time in adoration and meditation in solitude, he does not possess riches and objects there but he has a subtle desire that he will be honoured and praised by the people as they will regard him as wise because he meditates on God in solitude.

included in duty. We need not do the work which is beyond our capacity.

'Bhayābhaye'—A man should think of the root of fear and fearlessness. The action which may cause harm to one's own self as well as to others gives birth to fear. But the action which is performed for the welfare of all beings is likely to cause fearlessness. When a man performs an action which ought not to be done, he is full of fear thinking of his dishonour, blame and insult. But when a man works according to the ordinance of the scriptures for the welfare of all beings in order to please God, he remains fearless. This fearlessness leads him to God-Realization.

'Bandhaṁ mokṣaṁ ca yā vetti'—He who externally performs virtuous actions such as sacrifice, charity and pilgrimage etc., but internally has a desire for the unreal and perishable objects and heavenly pleasures etc., his actions lead him to bondage. But the striver who has an exclusive devotion to God, attains liberation.

A man thinks that he is dependent because he does not possess certain things, but he is independent when those things are available to him. But in fact he is dependent in both the cases. The difference is that in the former case the dependence is seen and felt while in the latter case it is not seen because at that time a man becomes blind. But in fact both of them are dependence which leads to bondage. The former is the revealed bitter poison while the latter is hidden sweet poison. But both of them are poisons which are fatal.

It means that all worldly desires lead to bondage while desirelessness leads to liberation. The need (necessity) for God also leads to liberation.* If a man has a desire, it is a bondage whether he possesses the thing or not. But if he is free from desires, he is liberated whether he possesses things or not.

'Buddhiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī'—Thus the intellect which knows the reality about the path of work and renunciation, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation—that intellect is Sāttvika. What is the reality ? The reality is that we should know that we have no affinity with the world, we have merely assumed our affinity with it, while our affinity with God Who is the illuminator and base of the entire creation is natural. This is the reality which should be known by the Sāttvika intellect.

Link:–The Lord now defines Rājasika intellect.

यया धर्ममधर्मं च कार्यं चाकार्यमेव च ।
अयथावत्प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ ३१ ॥

yayā dharmamadharmaṁ ca kāryaṁ cākāryameva ca
ayathāvatprajānāti buddhiḥ sā pārtha rājasī

The intellect by which one wrongly understands Dharma (the right) and Adharma (the wrong), what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, is Rājasika (Passionate). 31

Comment:

'Yayā dharmamadharmaṁ ca'—The noble pursuits which are prescribed by the scriptures and which lead a man to salvation, are covered by the term 'Dharma', while the evil pursuits which are prohibited by the scriptures and which hurls a person down into the dark abyss of ignorance are included in 'Adharma' Service to parents and other elderly people,

* There is a difference between 'desire' and 'need' (necessity). There is desire for the worldly things while there is need for God. A desire remains unfulfilled and is to be renounced while a need is fulfilled. If a person gives up worldly desires, God is automatically realized.

acts of benevolence such as construction of wells, hospices, hospitals, offering charity to the poor and the needy and spending money liberally for the society without expecting any reward—these acts are included in Dharma. But inflicting pain on others for one's own selfish motive is Adharma. In fact that which leads to emancipation is Dharma while that which leads to bondage is Adharma.

'Kāryaṁ cākāryameva ca'—That which has been sanctioned by the scriptures according to one's caste, (social order) stage of life at a particular time and place is 'Kārya' (Duty) while that which is forbidden by the scriptures and which ought not to be done is 'Akārya' (Prohibited action). Some acts which are worth performing for a particular class may be worth abstaining from for the people of the other class. Performance of sacrifice, officiating at sacrifices and marriages, and accepting charity and gifts etc., are worth performing for a Brāhmaṇa (a member of the priest class) while those acts are forbidden for the members of the warrior class, trading class and labouring class.

A servant should perform his duty honestly and whole-heartedly by devoting full time and energy. He should abstain from bribery, idleness and laziness. Similarly the government officers should work for the public welfare by giving up their selfishness and pride.

The path of work and renunciation, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation mentioned in 'Sāttvika' intellect, should also be included in it in the expression 'Eva ca' (Even and).

'Ayathāvatprajānāti buddhiḥ sā pārtha rājasī'— Because of passion (attachment) the Rājasika intellect possesses evil propensities such as selfishness, partiality and inequanimity etc. So it can't know what is right, what is wrong; what is fear, what is fearlessness; what ought to be done and what ought not to be done; and what is bondage and what is liberation.

Attachment to a person, thing, incident, action and circumstance causes aversion to other persons, things, incidents, actions and circumstances etc. A man gets entangled in the world through attachment and aversion. When he gets attached to the world, he can't know reality of the world. He can see the reality of the world if he remains indifferent to it. But he can know the Lord by identifying himself with Him.

In Sāttvika intellect discrimination is aroused while in Rājasika intellect it is veiled and becomes dim because of passion. So the intellect does not remain pure as water does not remain pure when earth is mixed in it. Therefore, a person of Rājasika intellect can't discriminate between the right and the wrong and between what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. So he can't perform what ought to be done and can't abstain from what ought not to be done.

Link:–The Lord now defines Tāmasika intellect (intellect of the nature of ignorance).

अधर्मं धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता ।
सर्वार्थान्विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥ ३२ ॥

adharmaṁ dharmamiti yā manyate tamasāvṛtā
sarvārthānviparītāṁśca buddhiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī

That which enveloped in darkness, conceives as right what is wrong and sees all things perverted (contrary to the truth), that intellect, O Pārtha (Arjuna) is Tāmasika. (of the nature of ignorance). 32

Comment:

'Adharmaṁ dharmamiti yā manyate tamasāvṛtā'—The intellect which reproaches God, which acts against

the ordinance of the scriptures, which violates the rules of caste (Varṇa) (social order) and stage of life (Āśrama), which shows disrespect towards parents, teachers and saints and which regards the sinful acts such as falsehood, fraud, dishonesty, forgery, taking prohibited food and adultery etc., as acts of virtue, is said to mistake 'Adharma' (Wrong) as 'Dharma' (Right).

Obedience and service to parents, study of the scriptures, following decorums of 'Varṇa' and 'Āśrama', rendering service to others with body, mind and riches, translating saints' teachings into practice taking pure meal and performance of virtuous actions which are prescribed by the scripture, are regarded as improper by the people of Tāmasika intellect. Thus they regard 'Dharma' (Right) as 'Adharma' (Wrong).

The people of Tāmasika intellect believe that Brāhmaṇas (the people of the priest class) who are the law makers showed themselves superior to other people and bound them by different rules and laws. They hold that India cannot progress so long as the people follow the ordinance of the scriptures and the sacred books. According to them Dharma consists in going against the scriptural injunctions and social decorum.

'Sarvārthānviparītāṁśca' —They regard the body as the self and the perishable world as real. They are non-believers. They regard themselves more learned than and superior even to saints. Instead of eternal bliss they hanker after mundane pleasures considering them real. They look upon vices as virtues and the wrong as right. They view all things in a perverted light.

'Buddhiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī' —The intellect enveloped in darkness conceives as right what is wrong and bad what is good and sees all things perverted—such intellect is Tāmasika which leads to infernal regions (Gītā 14/18). So a person who wants to attain salvation, should renounce this Tāmasika intellect totally.

Link:–The Lord now defines Sāttvika firmness (steadiness).

धृत्या यया धारयते मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः ।
योगेनाव्यभिचारिण्या धृतिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥ ३३ ॥

dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate manaḥprāṇendriyakriyāḥ
yogenāvyabhicāriṇyā dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī

The unwavering firmness by which, through Yoga, (equanimity) one controls the activities of the mind, the life breaths and the senses, that is Sāttvika firmness (firmness of the nature of goodness). 33

Comment:

'Dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate manaḥ-prāṇendriyakriyāḥ yogenāvyabhi-cāriṇyā' —Equanimity or even-mindedness in worldly profit and loss, victory and defeat, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, success and failure is called Yoga.

When a man besides having the goal of God-Realization, has a desire for success, fame, honour and mundane as well as heavenly pleasures etc., his firmness is wavering. But when his only aim is God-Realization, his firmness is unwavering.

The faculty of resolutely maintaining one's beliefs, principles, aim, feelings, actions, inclinations and ideas etc., is called 'Dhṛti' (Firmness). A man by unwavering firmness, through Yoga (equanimity) controls the activities of the mind, the life breaths and senses.

When the mind becomes free from different kinds of thoughts that come out of attachment or aversion, and when it gets fixed on one object where it ought to be fixed, it is said control over the activities of the mind by unwavering firmness.

When the process of exhalation and inhalation is regulated and becomes even, the activities of the life-breaths are said to be controlled by unwavering firmness.

When the senses of sound, touch, form, taste and smell don't get attached to the sense-objects but remain under control, the activities of the senses are said to be controlled by unwavering firmness.

'Dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī'—The unwavering firmness by which one controls the activities of the mind, the life-breaths and the senses, that firmness is Sāttvikī.

Link:–Now the Lord defines Rājasika firmness.

यया तु धर्मकामार्थान्धृत्या धारयतेऽर्जुन ।
प्रसङ्गेन फलाकाङ्क्षी धृतिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ ३४ ॥

yayā tu dharmakāmārthāndhṛtyā dhārayate'rjuna
prasaṅgena phalākāṅkṣī dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha rājasī

That, O Pārtha (Arjuna), by which, on account of attachment and desire for reward, one holds fast to Dharma (duty), pleasure and wealth—that firmness is Rājasika (of the nature of passion). 34

Comment:

'Yayā tu dharmakāmārthāndhṛtyā dhārayate'rjuna'—A man by passionate firmness performs virtuous acts in order to reap their fruits in the form of wealth and pleasures.

On special occasion he offers charity, goes on a pilgrimage and arranges religious programmes such as loud chanting etc., in order to get their reward. So he holds fast to Dharma (Duty) for reward.*

He wants to enjoy the mundane pleasures and believes that a man's life without pleasures is meaningless. Thus he holds fast to pleasures.

He believes that wealth is part and parcel of a man's life. Without wealth (money) no virtuous actions (Dharma) are possible. All the functions are organised by spending money. It is only money which gives status and position to a man. It begets respect and honour. Without money none is respected. So a man should hoard as much wealth as he can. According to him a man wins name, fame and honour because of wealth and nothing is possible without it. Thus he holds fast to wealth.

'Prasaṅgena phalākāṅkṣī dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha rājasī' —Whatever virtuous actions because of his too much passion (attachment) a Rājasika man performs according to the ordinance of the scriptures, he performs them with the desire of reward in the form of pleasures, honour, name and praise etc., here and heavenly enjoyments hereafter. The firmness of such people, who are too much attached to the world and who have a desire for reward, is Rājasika.

Link:–Now the Lord defines Tāmasika firmness (Firmness of the mode of ignorance).

यया स्वप्नं भयं शोकं विषादं मदमेव च ।
न विमुञ्चति दुर्मेधा धृतिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥ ३५ ॥

yayā svapnaṁ bhayaṁ śokaṁ viṣādaṁ madameva ca
na vimuñcati durmedhā dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī

That, by which a fool does not give up sleep, fear, grief, depression (despair) and conceit (arrogance) that firmness, O Arjuna, is Tāmasika (of the nature of ignorance). 35

* It one holds fast to Dharma (duty) for wealth and spends money for Dharma, both of them enhance each other. But if one holds fast to Dharma and spends wealth in order to reap its fruit, after bearing fruit both of them perish.

Comment:

'Yayā svapnaṁ bhayaṁ śokaṁ viṣādaṁ madameva ca na vimuñcati durmedhā dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī'— Because of Tāmasika firmness a man does not give up excessive sleep, external and internal fear, grief, depression and conceit but he rather remains engrossed in them. He is sometimes addicted to too much sleep and indolence, he sometimes entertains fear because of death, diseases, dishonour, defame, insult, ill health and loss of wealth etc., he is sometimes grieved and depressed, while sometimes he is self-conceited because of favourable circumstances.

Besides the above mentioned evil propensities other evils such as indolence, pride, hypocrisy, aversion, jealousy, violence and usurpation etc., can be included in the expression 'Eva ca' (And also).

The firmness which does not give up sleep, fear, grief etc., is Tāmasika.

In the thirty-third and thirty-fourth verses the Lord by the term 'Dhārayate' means to say that Sāttvika and Rājasika persons hold fast to the Sāttvika and Rājasika firmness respectively. But in the case of the Tāmasika person it is not mentioned that he holds fast to the Tāmasika firmness because a Tāmasika person out of ignorance and delusion is naturally so much engrossed in sleep, fear, grief and despair etc., that he does not give them up.

Out of these three kinds of firmness, in the Rājasika and Tāmasika firmness there is mention of the doer by the terms 'Phalākāṅkṣī' and 'Durmedhā' while the doer has not been mentioned in the Sāttvika firmness because in it the doer remains detached, he has no sense of doership, while in the Rājasika and Tāmasika firmness, the doer remains attached.

An Important Fact

This human life has predominance of discrimination. This discrimination is clearly revealed in a Sāttvika person and so he has the only aim of his life to realize God. In a Rājasika person because of the predominance of attachment to the mundane things and pleasures, this discrimination is not clearly revealed, yet by his dim discrimination he wants to win pleasures, praise and honour etc., here and heavenly pleasures, hereafter and he does not act against decorum. But a Tāmasika person's discrimination is completely veiled, he remains engrossed in Tāmasika propensities such as sleep, fear and grief etc.

In the spiritual discipline actions don't play such an important role as the aim does. Actions, thoughts and trance performed by the physical, subtle and causal bodies respectively are all activities of the bodies. But the aim that he has to realize God is decided by the self. As is the aim, so are the actions. The aim can be fixed by the Sāttvika intellect while a man holds firm to it by Sāttvika firmness. So from the thirty-third verse to the thirty-fifth verse the Lord by addressing Arjuna as 'Pārtha' six times warns him regarding him as the representative of the strivers that without worrying about the mundane persons and objects he should hold fast to his aim by giving up Rājasika and Tāmasika propensities.

Link:—A man wants to perform actions in order to gain happiness (joy). So the Lord in the next four verses classifies happiness under three heads.

सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ।
अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति॥ ३६॥
यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम्।
तत्सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम्॥ ३७॥

sukhaṁ tvidānīṁ trividhaṁ śṛṇu me bharatarṣabha
abhyāsādramate yatra duḥkhāntaṁ ca nigacchati
yattadagre viṣamiva pariṇāme'mṛtopamam
tatsukhaṁ sāttvikaṁ proktamātmabuddhiprasādajam

And now hear from Me, O Arjuna, the threefold happiness, in which one rejoices by practice and surely comes to the end of pain. That happiness which is like poison at first but like nectar at the end, which springs from the placidity of mind brought about by meditation on God is said to be Sāttvika (of the nature of goodness). 36-37

Comment:

'Bharatarṣabha'—The Lord addresses Arjuna as Bharatarṣabha, the best of all the persons in the Bharata family, to emphasize the fact that it is easy for him to overcome the Rājasika and Tāmasika pleasures. He has overcome the Rājasika pleasure because he rejected the offer of the beautiful heavenly damsel named Urvaśī. Similarly he has overcome the Tāmasika pleasure of sleep and he is called 'Guḍākeśa', the conqueror of sleep.

'Sukhaṁ tu idānīm'—Having classified knowledge, action, agent, intellect and firmness under three heads, the Lord here by using the term 'Tu' declares that happiness is also of three kinds. Here a fact needs special attention. The fact is that the main stumbling block to spiritual progress or God-Realization is the desire for pleasures.

Even the Sāttvika happiness, if anyone is attached to it, leads to bondage. If a striver is attached to the happiness which he receives out of adoration, meditation and even trance, it leads him to bondage by depriving him of God-Realization (Gītā 14/6). Now the question arises whether the eternal bliss of God-Realization should also not be enjoyed. In fact the eternal bliss is not enjoyed, it is experienced or felt (Gītā 5/21; 6/21, 28). If a striver does not enjoy the happiness derived out of spiritual discipline, he experiences that eternal bliss naturally. The Lord has used the term 'Tu' to divert the strivers' attention to this eternal bliss.

Here the Lord by using the term 'Idānīm' means to say that Arjuna wanted to know the true nature of renunciation (Saṁnyāsa) and the Discipline of Action (Tyāga); so in response to his curiosity the Lord classified abandonment, knowledge, action, agent and firmness each under three heads. But the aim of all of them is to derive pleasure (happiness). So the Lord classifies happiness under three heads.

'Trividhaṁ śṛṇu me'—The people remain so much engrossed in Rājasika and Tāmasika pleasures that they can't imagine that there is Sāttvika happiness transcending them. So the Lord asks Arjuna to choose the Sāttvika joy (happiness) by rejecting the Rājasika and the Tāmasika ones, because the Sāttvika joy is conducive to God-Realization while the Rājasika and Tāmasika pleasures by entangling a man in the world, leads him to a downfall.

'Abhyāsādramate yatra'—In Sāttvika happiness one rejoices by practice. An ordinary man can't rejoice in it without practice. In Rājasika and Tāmasika pleasure there is no need of any practice. Beings are naturally attracted to the Rājasika and the Tāmasika pleasures. The senses are attracted towards the sense-objects, the mind and intellect are attracted towards pleasures and prosperity and there is an inclination towards sleep in the state of tiredness naturally. All beings like pleasures, born of sense—contacts, pride, praise and sleep etc. Even dogs get pleased when they are honoured and displeased when they are dishonoured.

Now the question rises what sort of practice is required to gain Sāttvika happiness. Hearing, thinking, study of the scriptures and removal of the Rājasika and Tāmasika

inclinations etc., are included in the term 'Practice'.

A striver should practise adoration and meditation etc., but he should not enjoy them. This is the meaning which the Lord wants to convey by the expression 'Abhyāsādramate'.

'Duḥkhāntaṁ ca nigacchati'— By practice as a man develops interest in and attraction for the Sāttvika happiness, his sorrows come to an end and he gains happiness, or joy (Gītā 2/65).

The Lord by using the conjunction 'Ca' (and) means to convey that a striver can't get rid of pain or sorrows so long as he rejoices in Sāttvika happiness. The reason is that even the Sāttvika happiness is born of the placidity of mind and whatever is born is perishable. So how can the perishable bring sorrows to an end ? A striver instead of being attached to the Sāttvika happiness, should transcend it. By doing so his sorrows come to an end.

'Ātmabuddhiprasādajam'— The mind instead of attaching importance to honour, praise, pleasure and prosperity, thinks only of God. This thinking gives placidity of mind (Gītā 2/64). From placidity of mind accrues Sāttvika happiness. It means that when a man being totally detached from the mundane contact born pleasures, gets his mind merged in meditation on God, the happiness experienced is said to be Sāttvika.

'Yattadagre viṣamiva' —By the terms 'Yat' (Which) and 'Tat' (That) the Lord means to convey that the Sāttvika happiness has not yet been experienced or felt. The striver has the only aim to gain it. But he experiences the Rājasika and Tāmasika pleasures. So he faces difficulty in abandoning Rājasika and Tāmasika pleasures because he has been enjoying them since several births. But he has not yet relished the Sāttvika happiness. So having no real experience of the Sāttvika happiness he initially finds it most unpleasant like poison.

In fact the Sāttvika happiness initially is not like poison, but it is unpleasant like poison to abandon Rājasika and Tāmasika pleasures. As a boy takes more interest in play and recreation than in studies in the beginning because he does not know the importance of studies. But when he goes on studying and gets success in examination, he becomes interested in studies and then he attaches more importance to it. Similarly the people who are attached to Tāmasika and Rājasika pleasures feel Sāttvika happiness like poison. But to those strivers who are not attached to the mundane pleasures, who have an inclination for the study of the scriptures, for good company, loud chanting, meditation and adoration etc., and whose knowledge, actions, intellect and firmness are Sāttvika, this Sāttvika happiness is like nectar to them from the very beginning. It is not unpleasant, taxing and irksome to them.

'Pariṇāme'mṛtopamam'—A striver develops the modes of goodness through spiritual discipline. When the mode of goodness is predominant, the light of wisdom shines in the mind and senses, and good virtues such as peace and immutability etc., are revealed*. It is because of these virtues that it is like nectar at the end. If this happiness is not enjoyed, a striver attains eternal bliss (Gītā 5/21). The Sāttvika happiness is like nectar at the end because by gaining it, a man transcends the Rājasika and Tāmasika pleasures and his affinity with Matter is renounced which leads him to God-Realization.

'Tatsukhaṁ sāttvikaṁ proktam'— The happiness which is gained by good company, study of the scriptures, loud chanting, meditation and adoration etc., is neither like the pleasure which is gained by honour, praise and prosperity etc., nor like the pleasure which one derives out of heedlessness, indolence and excessive sleep etc., but it is happiness which is gained by having affinity with God. So it has been said to be Sāttvika (of the nature of goodness).

* The three modes—of goodness, of passion and of ignorance abide in the mind unrevealed. They are known by their distinctive characteristics as described from the eleventh to the thirteenth verses of the fourteenth chapter.

Link:–The Lord now defines Rājasika happiness.

विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।
परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥ ३८ ॥

viṣayendriyasaṁyogādyattadagre'mṛtopamam
pariṇāme viṣamiva tatsukhaṁ rājasaṁ smṛtam

The happiness which is derived from the contact of the senses with their objects and which is like nectar at first but like poison at the end–such happiness is said to be passionate. 38

Comment:

'Viṣayendriyasaṁyogāt'— The happiness, which is derived from the contact of the senses with their objects, does not need any practice. Every being including a beast, a bird, an insect or a germ derives this happiness without doing any practice. A man since his childhood has been pleased in favourable and displeased in unfavourable circumstances. So in this passionate happiness there is no need of practice.

'Yattadagre'mṛtopamam'— The Lord declares that the passionate happiness is like nectar at first. It means that when a passionate man thinks to enjoy such happiness, and when he begins to enjoy it, he derives a lot of happiness. But when he goes on enjoying it, the joy is gradually reduced and then he develops disinclination towards it. Even then if he goes on enjoying it, he experiences a burning sensation and pain.

Secondly these sensual pleasures seem very pleasant when people hear of them and when the mind is attracted towards them. But when they are enjoyed, they are not so pleasant. So in the Gītā it is declared—When unwise people hear of the heavenly pleasures, they get deeply attached to them (Gītā 2/42) and they hanker after them. But when they actually enjoy the heavenly pleasures, they don't find them much pleasant and attractive.

'Pariṇāme viṣamiva'—The sensual pleasures seem very pleasant at first. But when a person goes on enjoying them, they have their bitter and evil consequences and so those pleasures turn into poison. These sensual pleasures lead a man to eighty-four lac forms of lives, prisons, hells and sorrows because the fruit of Rājasika action is sorrow (Gītā 14/16).

It is because of passion (attachment) that people have to suffer pain. A man who was rich in the past but has become poor now, has to undergo more suffering than the person who has always been poor. Similarly the person who tasted different kinds of dishes, feels shortage when he gets a meagre meal. This shortage causes pain.

A man makes efforts in order to fulfil his desire. He may either succeed or fail in fulfilling it. If he succeeds, it gives birth to other desires but if he fails, he feels sad and dejected and again tries to satisfy it. Thus the cycle of desires goes on without an end and their consequences like poison are bitter.

Now a question arises that the persons who enjoy passionate pleasures should die like the men who eat poison. The answer is that passionate happiness does not kill a man as poison does but a person develops disinclination for it as he has for poison. It means that passionate happiness is not posion but is like poison.

Passionate happiness is like poison because it goes on killing a man for several births where as poison kills only once. A man possessing passionate happiness can't get peace even in heaven because there also he is jealous of his superiors and equals and is proud of his achievement after seeing those who are inferior to him. Moreover they have to return to the world of mortals,

when their merit is exhausted (Gītā 9/21). Again after coming to the mortal world they perform virtuous actions and reap their fruits in heaven. Thus they follow the cycle of birth and death (9/21). If because of their attachment they are engaged in sinful acts, they have to take birth in eighty-four lac forms of lives and go to hells and then follow the cycle of birth and death endlessly. So this happiness has been called like poison at the end.

'Tatsukham rājasam smṛtam'— In the thirty-seventh verse the Lord used the term 'Proktam' for the Sāttvika happiness while here he has used the verb 'Smṛtam'. It means that a man knows that the result of Rājasika happiness is sorrow or pain, yet he hankers after it because of his attachment to it. If he thinks of its consequences, he will not be entangled in Rājasika happiness. Moreover in the scriptures and histories there are several examples which remind that Rājasika happiness results in pain or sorrow. So the term 'Smṛtam' has been used in order to remind him of its evil consequences.

A man of Sāttvika nature instead of paying attention to the instantaneous happiness thinks of its result while a man of Rājasika nature instead of thinking of the result is engaged in instantaneous happiness. So he remains entangled in the worldly snare. The Lord declares,"The pleasures which are born of sense– contacts are verily sources of pain, though they appear as enjoyable to the worldly minded people at first" (Gītā 5/22). So a striver instead of being entangled in the Rājasika happiness should develop dispassion for the world.

Link:–The Lord now defines Tāmasika happiness.

यदग्रे चानुबन्धे च सुखं मोहनमात्मनः ।
निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ ३९ ॥

yadagre cānubandhe ca sukham mohanamātmanaḥ
nidrālasyapramādottham tattāmasamudāhṛtam

That happiness which deludes the soul both at the beginning and at the end and which arises from sleep, indolence and heedlessness, is declared to be Tāmasika (of the nature of ignorance). 39

Comment:

'Nidrālasyapramādottham'—Excessive attachment transforms itself into the mode of ignorance which is called delusion. It is because of delusion that a man wants to sleep for a long time even though he does not get a sound sleep. Without sound sleep he remains lethargic and he goes on dreaming. His time is wasted. But a man of Tāmasika nature derives happiness out of this sort of sleep.

A man of the mood of ignorance remains indolent. He wastes his time in idleness and goes on postponing even the obligatory duties. He derives pleasure out of this sort of indolence. Being idle his senses and mind etc., become inactive and he only thinks of the futile worldly affairs which lead him to pains, sorrows, worries and disquietude.

He becomes heedless when the mode of ignorance is enhanced. He does not perform his obligatory duties but he indulges in idle pursuits such as smoking, drinking, displays etc., and evils such as thefts, robberies, falsehood, fraud, forgery and forbidden food etc.

Such a person derives pleasures out of indolence as well as heedlessness. It is because of this nature that labourers want to get full wages without performing their duty honestly and sincerely, the physicians charge fees from the patients again and again without giving them proper treatment

and the milkmen mix water in milk though they charge cost of the pure milk. This heedlessness leads them to hells.

Heedlessness veils discrimination while sleep and indolence veil light of the mode of goodness. When discrimination is veiled, heedlessness is revealed and when light is veiled, indolence and sleep are revealed. A Tāmasika person derives pleasures out of sleep, indolence and heedlessness. So Tāmasika happiness is said to arise from these three.

An Important Fact

Sleep is of two kinds—moderate and excessive.

(1) Moderate sleep—sleep provides rest, purity and freshness. It provides strength and zeal to the mundane as well as spiritual activities. It is not defective, it is rather indispensable (Gītā 6/17) and provides him freshness and energy to perform the mundane and spiritual acts promptly.

Sleep is essential for a striver for invigoration. A striver free from worldly pursuits gets sleep very soon. He who is engrossed in worldly thoughts can't get sleep quickly. This proves that affinity with the world does not allow to enjoy the happiness of sleep. In sound sleep connection with the world snaps and one gets connected with God. Thus sound sleep gives vitality and energy to be engaged in spiritual practice.

Sleep is Tāmasika. It contains two elements—unconsciousness and rest. The former causes delusion which is to be shunned while the latter is moderate which is to be adopted. Good strivers through spiritual discipline can get great rest and happiness even during wakefulness because they remain fixed in God without thinking of the worldly affairs. If they don't get attached even to this rest, and happiness they attain God-Realization.

Strivers should not go to bed in order to rest but they should think that they are going to devote that time to adoration and devotion by lying down on the cot as they adored the Lord during the day by performing various duties.

(2) Excessive sleep—Excessive sleep makes a man indolent and he feels drowsy all the time. In the eighth verse of the fourteenth chapter the Lord used first heedlessness, then indolence and finally sleep, while here He has reversed the order. The reason is that there is the context how they bind all embodied beings but here the context is how they degrade a man. As far as binding force is concerned, the first and foremost position goes to heedlessness. Heedlessness conduces a man to perform forbidden actions which ruin him. Indolence hinders a man from performing virtuous actions. So it has been given the second place. As far as sleep is concerned, it is only excessive sleep not the moderate one, which binds a man. So the third place has been given to sleep. But here in this verse the order is changed because moderate sleep does not cause ruin, it is only excessive sleep which is conducive to ruin. But indolence is more conducive to ruin than sleep while heedlessness is the most conducive one. Excessive sleep will lead a man to lower births while indolence and heedlessness will lead him to hells* by depriving him of his discrimination.

'Yadagre cānubandhe ca sukham mohanamātmanaḥ'—The happiness, which arises from sleep, indolence and heedlessness, deludes the soul both at the beginning and at the end. Beings lose their discrimination under the grip of this happiness. So birds, beasts, moths and insects etc., don't think what ought to be done at the beginning and also don't think of its consequences. Such happiness is declared to be Tāmasika.

* Heedlessness conduces a man to undertake idle pursuits for the sake of diversion. But when passion (attachment) joins heedlessness, both give birth to desire. It is out of desire that a man commits several sins and crimes whose consequences are very horrible.

An Important Fact

(1) Prakṛti (Matter) and Puruṣa (Soul or Spirit) are two different entities and both of them are beginningless. This knowledge by which one knows this difference, is also beginningless. The knowledge (discrimination) is possessed by Puruṣa (Soul or Spirit or Self), not by Prakṛti. But when Puruṣa disregarding this discrimination assumes his affinity with Prakṛti, because of this affinity, attachment springs up.*

When attachment remains in its subtle form, there is predominance of discrimination. But when attachment enhances, discrimination is veiled. But if discrimination is revealed properly, attachment perishes and then the person is called liberated. It is because of attachment that a man runs after worldly pleasures born of Prakṛti. If he wants to gain Sāttvika happiness, he faces difficulty in renouncing Rājasika and Tāmasika happiness. But when attachment perishes, the poison-like happiness turns into nectar-like happiness. It is because of attachment that Rājasika (Passionate) happiness seems like nectar at first but like poison at the end. Attachment to the passionate happiness leads a man to endless pains and sorrows.

When this attachment is transformed to the mode of ignorance, a man wastes his time in sleep and indolence and he indulges in idle pursuits by giving up his duty. But a Tāmasika person derives happiness out of it. So it deludes the self both at the beginning and at the end.

(2) Actually the keleidoscopic world does not exist while God Who is the Truth, the Knowledge and the Bliss consolidated and Who is the base and the illuminator of the unreal, ever exists. The man (soul or self) being a fragment of God is also truth, knowledge and bliss consolidated. But when he has a desire for the unreal, his bliss is veiled. But as soon as he abandons the desire, the natural bliss is revealed.

When Sāttvika intellect merges in the eternal bliss, it becomes pure. The natural bliss which is experienced by the pure intellect is called Sāttvika happiness. When a man's affinity with this pure intellect is renounced, there remains natural bliss only. This bliss is named Sāttvika happiness because of its affinity with Sāttvika intellect, otherwise it is nothing besides the eternal bliss.

When a man has a desire to gain something, the mind and the intellect are attached to it. But as soon as he gains it, his attachment or attraction is abandoned and he becomes free from the pain which he suffered because of its shortage and he realizes the eternal self-evident bliss immediately. In fact he does not gain happiness by receiving the thing but by being free from attachment. But a Rājasika person out of ignorance thinks that it is so because he has received the thing. The union with the thing is external, while the happiness is something internal. So how can external union cause internal happiness ? The fact is that internal happiness is derived by renouncing the internal affinity with the thing. It means that when the thing is received, the internal affinity with the thing is renounced. As soon as this affinity is renounced the eternal natural bliss is experienced.

During sleep when intellect merges in the mode of ignorance. a man forgets all the things and objects of his wakeful state. Their memory is the cause of pain. So by forgetting them he derives happiness out of sleep. But because of the impurity of intellect, he does not experience the natural bliss. So the happiness which arises from sleep is called 'Tāmasika', (of the

* Because of attachment several evils are born in Prakṛti, not in Puruṣa. A man (Self) by identifying himself with Prakṛti (Matter) assumes the evils of Prakṛti in him and so he has to be an enjoyer (Bhogī). But when he realizes that the evils appear and disappear while he remains the same without any modification, he becomes equanimous (a Yogī).

mode of ignorance)*.

It means that a Sāttvika person derives happiness by having a disinclination for the world when his intellect merges in the self; a Rājasika person by the abandonment of attachment to the things, while a Tāmasika person by forgetting his duty and indulging in idle pursuits. Thus the natural bliss is veiled by the assumed affinity with the unreal. But the happiness experienced by all the Sāttvika, the Rājasika and the Tāmasika people is nothing but the reflection of the eternal natural bliss. So if we renounce attachment to the three kinds of happiness, we may progress spiritually. So a striver should abandon the three kinds of happiness.

Link:–The Lord classified knowledge, action and happiness under three heads characterized by the three modes of nature. Now in the next verse He winds up the topic by declaring that all the objects of this creation are classified under these three heads characterized by these three modes of nature.

न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः ।
सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात्त्रिभिर्गुणैः ॥ ४० ॥

na tadasti pṛthivyāṁ vā divi deveṣu vā punaḥ
sattvaṁ prakṛtijairmuktaṁ yadebhiḥ syāttribhirguṇaiḥ

There is no being on earth or again among the gods in heaven, that is free from the three modes born of nature. 40

Comment:

[At the beginning of this chapter Arjuna desired to know severally the true nature of renunciation (Saṁnyāsa) and Tyāga (Karmayoga). So the Lord first described abandonment (Karmayoga). Winding up the topic the Lord declared,"Pleasant, unpleasant and mixed—threefold is the fruit of action accruing to those who have not relinquished the fruit, but there is none whatever for those who have relinquished the fruit." Having declared so, in the thirteenth verse by beginning the topic of Sāṅkhyayoga (Discipline of Knowledge) He explained five factors which contribute to the accomplishment of actions. In the sixteenth and seventeenth verses He decried those who look upon the self as doer and praised those who are free from egoistic notion. In the eighteenth verse He mentioned the factors which motivate actions and also the constituents of actions while the reality is free from incitement and constituents. Then He classified knowledge, action, agent, understanding (intellect), firmness and happiness into three kinds. While describing the three kinds of happiness He explained the superiority of Sāttvika happiness to Rājasika and Tāmasika happiness, though all the three are derived by having affinity with Prakṛti. But the real joy which transcends the three modes of nature is unique and supreme (Gītā 6/21).

Even the Sāttvika happiness is not eternal

* During sleep a man's intellect gets deluded i.e., it becomes unconscious. The man derives happiness by forgetting the world. So this happiness is called Tāmasika. If intellect with senses is not deluded, it becomes the state of trance which provides rest. A man can transcend the three modes of nature only if he is not attached to this happiness derived out of trance.

Prakṛti is active and kaleidoscopic while God is eternal, calm, immutable, flawless, steady and He does not undergo any modifications. During sleep a man gets established in Him. But as his mind is attracted towards pleasures and prosperity, after waking he hankers after prosperity and pleasures. Thus because of his attachment to prosperity and pleasures he can't remain established either in God or the self. If he renounces this attachment, he can remain established in the self naturally.

because the Lord has declared that it springs from the placidity of mind and whatever is born is not eternal. The Lord means to say that a striver has to rise above this Sāttvika happiness also. By transcending the nature and its three modes he has to realize the real bliss of God or the self. So the Lord declares—]

'Na tadasti pṛthivyāṁ vā divi deveṣu vā punaḥ'—Here the term 'Pṛthivyām' denotes the mortal worlds as well as other lower worlds than the earth, 'Divi' denotes heaven, 'Deveṣu' denotes all beings such as men, gods, demons, devils, birds, beasts insects, trees and plants etc., whether moving or unmoving while the expression 'Vā punaḥ' denotes infinite universes. It means that either in the celestial world or in the middle region or in the terrestrial world, in infinite universes there is no object or being free from these three modes of nature. All of them are connected with these three modes of nature.

'Sattvaṁ prakṛtijairmuktaṁ yadebhiḥ syāttribhirguṇaiḥ'—Nature and its evolutes are of three modes and are kaleidoscopic. A man is bound by having connection with them and he is liberated by renouncing connection with them because the self is pure and it undergoes no modifications. Connection with the nature gives birth to egoism which makes him dependent though he feels that he is independent. The egoistic notion gives birth to attachment and desire etc. Therefore in fact he becomes dependent to persons and things etc. So he should be free from the modes of nature.

A striver first of all should enhance the mode of goodness by abandoning the modes of passion and ignorance. In the mode of goodness also a man should not be attached to happiness and knowledge because attachment to them binds him. So he should transcend the mode of goodness by abandoning attachment. First he should mould his life by possessing Sāttvika knowledge, action, understanding, firmness and happiness etc., because discrimination (wisdom) remains aroused in them. This discrimination conduces him to be free from affinity with 'Prakṛti'. But finally he should transcend them also by abandoning attachment to them.

Link:–While discussing the nature of abandonment the Lord declared, "The abandonment of any duty that ought to be done is not right. The abandonment of it through ignorance is declared to be of the nature of ignorance" (18/7). "He who gives up duty for fear of physical suffering, performs abandonment of the passionate kind (18/8) while he who performs a prescribed duty as a thing that ought to be done, abandoning attachment and the fruit—his abandonment is reagrded as one of goodness" (18/9). "In the Sāṅkhyayoga while explaining the five factors for the accomplishment of all actions, the Lord declared, "An action which is obligatory, which is performed without attachment, without love or hate by one who seeks no reward, is said to be Sāttvika" (18/23). The Lord resumes the topic of obligatory actions (duties) allotted to the members of four Varṇas (Castes) — Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra along with Bhaktiyoga.

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशां शूद्राणां च परंतप ।
कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः ॥ ४१ ॥

brāhmaṇakṣatriyaviśāṁ śūdrāṇāṁ ca paraṁtapa
karmāṇi pravibhaktāni svabhāvaprabhavairguṇaiḥ

Of Brāhmaṇas, of Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas, as also of Śūdras, O conqueror of foes (Arjuna), the duties are distributed, in accordance with the modes born of their nature. 41

Comment:

'Brāhmaṇakṣatriyaviśāṁ śūdrāṇāṁ ca paramtapa'—Here the Brāhmaṇas, the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas are included in one category while the Śūdras are included in a different category. The former three are 'Dvijas' (Twice born) as they are eligible for initiation and so they wear the sacred thread known as 'Yajñopavīta' while the fourth one is not eligible to wear the sacred thread. For them different duties have been allotted according to their caste as ordained by the scriptures.

'Karmāṇi pravibhakatāni svabhāvaprabhavairguṇaiḥ'—The actions, which a man performs, leave their impressions in his mind and those impressions decide his nature. Thus the nature which is decided by the impressions of actions of the innumerable life times, give birth to the propensities of the modes of goodness, of passion and of ignorance. The four castes—Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra and their obligatory duties have been decided according to the propensities of those modes (Gītā 4/13), because a man acts according to the propensities of the mode he possesses.

An Important Fact

(1)

Actions are of two kinds (i) Those that enable a being to be born in high and low wombs (ii) Those which create desirable and undesirable circumstances, and which have been called good, evil and mixed, the threefold fruit of action in the Gītā (18/12).

A serious thought reveals that all actions create desirable and undesirable circumstances. A man born in a high family receives honour while a man born in a low family receives dishonour. But it is not necessary that the former is always honoured while the latter is always dishonoured. So far as the second type of actions are concerned, they always create either desirable or undesirable circumstances.

A man is free in making proper use of both the desirable as well as the undesirable circumstances. Those who feel happy in desirable circumstances and sad in undesirable ones are ignorant while those who use them as the means for spiritual progress, are wise. The reason is that this human life has been bestowed upon us so that we may realize God. So all the circumstances are the means to realize Him.

Now the question arises how the desirable and undesirable circumstances are conducive to spiritual progress. The answer is that in desirable circumstances a striver should serve others while in undesirable circumstances he should give up desire for the desirable circumstance. Thus both of them can serve as means to progress spiritually.

(2)

In the scriptures it is mentioned that virtuous actions lead a being to heaven, evil actions to hell while the equality of the virtuous actions and evil actions leads him to human life. It shows that no man can be either wholly virtuous or wholly evil. Out of those virtuous and evil actions also in a certain field virtues may be more while in the other sphere evils may be more*. Similar is the division of the modes. Those who have the predominance of the mode of goodness go to the higher regions, those who have the predominance of the mode of passion go to the middle regions viz., region of men while those having predominance of the mode of ignorance go to the lower regions. Out of those going to one region, they are again divided into different categories according to their qualities.

Those who have predominance of the mode of goodness are born as Brāhmaṇas; those, who have predominance of the mode of passion and the mode of goodness occupy

* As in an examination an examinee may obtain poorer marks in a certain subject and better marks in other subjects. But the result is declared on the base of the aggregate marks. Similarly a man's virtuous actions may be more in one sphere while evil actions may be more in other sphere. It is the aggregate of the two which decides his birth. If the virtues and evils of different persons are equal in different spheres, they should receive happy and sad circumstances equally. But it does not generally happen. Similar is the case with the modes of nature as that of Sāttvika etc.

the secondary place, are born as Kṣatriyas; those who have the predominance of the mode of passion while the mode of ignorance is secondary, are born as Vaiśyas; and those with the predominance of the mode of ignorance are born as Śūdra. Out of these four Varṇas (Castes) also there are Brāhmaṇas of the low and high classes according to their birth. Moreover the favourable and the unfavourable circumstances are also different in different cases. Similar is the case in other Varṇas (Castes) also. So in the Gītā it has been declared that there is no being in the three worlds, that is free from the three modes born of nature (18/40).

Similar is the case with animals and birds etc., also. A cow is regarded as superior to a dog, a donkey or a pig. A pigeon is regarded as superior to a crow or a kite. All of them don't get similar desirable and undesirable circumstances. It means that among the beings of a region also there is a lot of difference in their circumstances etc.

Link:–The Lord now mentions the natural duties of a Brāhmaṇa (a member of the priest class).

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्रह्मकर्म स्वभावजम्॥ ४२॥

śamo damastapaḥ śaucaṁ kṣāntirārjavameva ca
jñānaṁ vijñānamāstikyaṁ brahmakarma svabhāvajam

Serenity, self-control, austerity, purity, forgiveness, uprightness, knowledge (wisdom), realization and belief in God, these are the duties of a Brāhmaṇa, born of his nature. 42

Comment:

'Śamaḥ'— 'Śamaḥ' means control of the mind, freeing it from distractions and concentrating it on the point where it should be concentrated.

'Damaḥ'—Control of the senses withdrawing them from external objects and employing them where they should be employed is 'Damaḥ'.

'Tapaḥ'—Austerity of the body, mind and speech has already been described in the Gītā (17/14-16). Here this term means enduring hardships happily while discharging one's duties.

'Śaucam'— 'Śaucam' means purity of one's mind, intellect, senses and body as well as of the activities and food etc.

'Kṣāntiḥ'—Total absence of the spirit of retaliation even when one is insulted or hurt or pained, in spite of having power, is called forgiveness (Kṣānti).

'Ārjavam'—Simplicity of the body and speech etc., without having any crookedness, fraud and knavery in the mind is known uprightness (Ārjavam).

'Jñānam'—Study of the Vedas, the scriptures and the historical records and fully grasping their teachings and meanings as well as the awareness of what ought to be done and what ought to he refrained from is 'Jñāna'.

'Vijñānam'—The proper method and observance of the religious sacrifice according to the Vedas and the scriptures is known 'Vijñāna'.

'Āstikyam' —Firm belief in God, the Vedas, the scriptures and the life after death and translation of their teachings into practice is 'Āstikyam'.

'Brahmakarma svabhāvajam'—A Brāhmaṇa's temperament is naturally suited to the performance of these above mentioned duties, such as serenity and self control etc., he experiences no difficulty in performing them.

A Brāhmaṇa has the predominance of the mode of goodness, his forefathers are pure and his actions of the previous birth are pure. So he faces no difficulty in possessing

the above mentioned nine qualities. In his life the actions of earning livelihood occupy a secondary place. As far as the people of other three Varṇas (Castes) are concerned because of the predominance of the modes of passion and ignorance, their actions of earning their livelihood also are included in natural actions. Therefore in the Gītā in the duties of a Brāhmaṇa only the actions which involve these qualities, not those of livelihood, have been included.

Link:–The Lord now mentions the natural duties of a Kṣatriya.

शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् ।
दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥ ४३ ॥

śauryaṁ tejo dhṛtirdākṣyaṁ yuddhe cāpyapalāyanam
dānamīśvarabhāvaśca kṣātraṁ karma svabhāvajam

Heroism, vigour, firmness, resourcefulness (dexterity), not fleeing from battle, charity and lordliness are the duties of a Kṣatriya (a member of the warrior class), born of his nature. 43

Comment:

'Śauryam'—Fighting heroically and fearlessly for a just and righteous cause* on the battle-field in the face of the most terrible calamity is 'Śauryam'.

'Tejaḥ'—The moral power of a person by which even sinners hesitate to commit sins or follow the path against the ordinance of the scriptures and social decorum is 'Tejah'.

'Dhṛtiḥ'—The unwavering firmness by which a man does not get unnerved, nor deviates from righteousness even under the most unfavourable or dangerous conditions is 'Dhṛtiḥ'.

'Dākṣyam'—The resourcefulness (dexterity) by which one controls, conducts and rules over the subjects properly and promptly is 'Dākṣya'.

Yuddhe cāpyapalāyanam'—A Kṣatriya never turns his back towards the battle-field even in the face of the gravest dangers, he never loses heart and never flees from the battle-field.

'Dānam'— Giving away one's own possession to deserving persons liberally is a duty of the Kṣatriyas. At present this charitable nature is seen among the Vaiśyas but they are not liberal in offering charity. Because of their greedy nature their charity is not Sāttvika (Good). (Gītā 17/20). But the Kṣatriyas offer charity liberally.

'Īśvarabhāvaśca'—The Kṣatriyas have a natural inclination to rule over their subjects. If they behold their subjects going against ethics and righteousness, they check them from the unrighteous or the wicked path and turn them towards the righteous and just path in a loving manner having no pride.

'Kṣātraṁ karma svabhāvajam' —A Kṣatriya is he who protects his subjects from suffering. The above mentioned are his natural duties.

Link:–The Lord now mentions the natural duties of a Vaiśya (a member of the trading class) and a Śūdra (a member of the labouring class).

* The battle which is fought as a duty without any selfish motive and without pre-decision, forced by circumstances, is righteous.

कृषिगौरक्ष्यवाणिज्यं वैश्यकर्म स्वभावजम्।
परिचर्यात्मकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम्॥ ४४॥

kṛṣigaurakṣyavāṇijyaṁ vaiśyakarma svabhāvajam
paricaryātmakaṁ karma śūdrasyāpi svabhāvajam

Agriculture, cow-rearing and honest trade are the duties of a Vaiśya, born of his nature, and actions consisting of service are the duteis of a Śūdra, born of his nature. 44

Comment:

'Kṛṣigaurakṣyavāṇijyaṁ vaiśya-karma svabhāvajam'—Agriculture, cow-rearing and pure trade are the duties of a Vaiśya born of his nature.

Pure trade consists in supplying the needs of the people by transporting the commodities from one place to another sincerely and honestly so that no one may feel shortage.

Lord Kṛṣṇa (because of his relationship with Nanda-Bābā) regarded himself as a Vaiśya*. So he himself grazed cows and calves. In the Manusmṛti (the code of Manu) it is mentioned that the duty of a Vaiśya is cow-rearing. So Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorts the Vaiśyas at least to rear cows , if they can't rear all the cattle. So the Vaiśyas should rear cows by applying all their resources, body, mind, power and riches.

An Important Fact Concerning Cow-Rearing

A cow is to be reared from every point of view. Human beings can attain the four important aims of life through cow-rearing—they are money (Artha), righteousness (Dharma), desire (Kāma) and salvation (Mokṣa). In the materialistic world of today a cow is very useful. Her milk, churned butter and dung add to the wealth of the nation. Our country is an agricultural country. So bullocks are used to plough the land. The land can also be ploughed by male-buffaloes or camels. But bullocks are superior to them. Buffaloes can't work so efficiently as bullocks can because the latter have more Sāttvika strength than the former and the latter can work for a longer time in the sun than the former. Moreover the number of the buffaloes is smaller than that of bullocks. As far as camels are concerned, they cost more than bullocks. If cows are reared, they give birth to bullocks. So bullocks are not to be bought. Bullocks born of the foreign cows can't be used in farming because ploughs can't be put on their necks as they have no withers.

The cow is a sacred animal. The air which touches her body becomes pure. Her dung and urine check epidemics such as plague and cholera etc. The houses plastered with dung are not so much affected by bombs as are the cemented houses. The dung kills poison. In Banārasa a saint saved a man, who was supposed to be dead by snake-bite, by smearing his body with dung two times. Urine of the cow is very useful in heart diseases. A little quantity of the urine of she calf as a dose everyday cures stomach diseases. A saint suffering from asthma had a lot of relief by drinking a little urine of the she-calf. In these days several medicines are prepared from the dung and urine of cows. Gas is also prepared from her dung for cooking purpose.

The corn produced by the dung and urine of the cows as manure is pure. The dung and urine of cows make the land more fertile than chemical fertilizers as was once experimented on the crop of grapes. The chemical fertilizers destroy the fertility of the land in a few years and make it barren while the manure of the cow dung and urine

* Agriculture. trade, cow-rearing and lending money for interest are the duties of a Vaiśya. But cow-rearing has been our profession since time immemorial (Śrīmadbhā. 10/24/21).

maintains its fertility. Cow-dung is being exported to foreign countries so that the lost fertility of the land there may be restored.

The cows of our country are gentle and Sāttvika. So their Sāttvika milk sharpens intellect and makes the nature mild. The foreign cows give more quantity of milk but as they are angry by nature, their milk makes us cruel. A she-buffalo gives more milk than a cow but her milk is not Sāttvika. Those who drink cows' milk are more active than those who drink the she-buffaloes' milk. Once the experiment was made on the military horses and it was found that the horses fed on cow-milk could cross the river while the horses fed on buffalo-milk could not, though the latter seemed stronger. The milk of she-camel being Tāmasika is not useful and its curd and butter are not prepared. In the Jurisprudence it is mentioned that camels, dogs and donkeys etc., are untouchable.

Cows occupy an important place in all religious rites. Her milk, churned butter (ghee) and dung etc., are used in rites of the birth, the tonsure and the sacred thread, etc. Cow-dung purifies a place. Cow milk is used in preparing sweet dish which is offered to Brāhmaṇas in honour of manes. A cow is offered as charity to a Brāhmaṇa to escape hells. In religious ceremonies a mixture of dung, urine, milk, curd and churned butter (ghee) known as 'Pañcagavya' is used.

Her ghee is used in religious sacrifices which are performed in order to satisfy desires. In the Raghu family cow had an important place. Her milk and ghee are nourishing.

Service to the cow without expectation of any reward leads to salvation and purifies the heart. Lord Kṛṣṇa is known as Gopāla because He staged the human play as a cowherd with bare feet. In ancient days sages reared cows and their milk and ghee sharpened their intellect. So they could produce great rare classics (literature). Her milk and butter provided them longevity, so a synonym of ghee (butter) is 'Āyu'. Great emperors went to those sages for consultation.

In the historical records there are names of innumerable persons who sacrificed their lives for the protection of cows. But how sad it is that today thousands of cows are slaughtered daily out of greed ! If this state of affairs continues, cows will totally disappear. Then cow-dung will not be available. Without cow-dung the land will grow barren and there will be no production of corn and cotton (cloth). The people will be deprived of the bare necessities of life such as food, water and clothes and they will have to lead a miserable life. The nation will become dependent and weak. Slaughter of cows is the main cause of famines, droughts, volcanoes and strifes etc. So it is our first and foremost duty to stop this slaughter with might and main.

We should rear cows, use their milk and butter, use cow-dung-gas for cooking, make cow-pens in order to protect them, protect the existing pastures (grazing grounds) and request the government to leave more pieces of land for pastures. The policy of cow-slaughter should be opposed and the government should be forced through public opinion to enforce the law to stop cow-slaughter immediately throughout the country for the protection of the country.

'Paricaryātmakam karma śūdrasyāpi svabhāvajam'— It is the duty of a Śūdra to render service to the people of the four Varṇas (Castes) with all his resources.

Here a doubt rises how can a Śūdra, who is born with the predominance of the mode of ignorance, endowed with seven evil propensities such as ignorance, heedlessness, indolence, sleep, unillumination, inactivity and delusion (Gītā 14/8,13,17) render service to others ? The clarification is that it is mentioned in the Gītā that those possessing the mode of goodness go upwards to the higher regions, the passionate remain in the middle region (mortal world) while those steeped in ignorance sink downwards (Gītā 14/18). If a being dies when Rajas (the mode of passion) is predominant in him, he is born

among men who are attached to action (Gītā 14/15). It means that all human beings have predominance of the mode of passion. All these human beings have further been divided into fourfold caste (social order) according to the predominance of their modes—Sāttvika, Rājasa or Tāmasa. So perfomance of actions is important for all human beings. Therefore the human birth has been called 'Karmayoni' (Birth for action). In the Gītā also while mentioning the duties of the four social orders the Lord mentions the expressions 'Svabhāvaja Karma' and 'Svabhāvaniyata Karma'. So all men are inclined to perform actions. Thus service is the duty of a Śūdra born of his nature and it involves no exertion for him.

The temperament of a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya is dominated by discrimination and they also possess purity while because of the predominance of delusion a Śūdra's discrimination is veiled. It is because of his veiled discrimination that he has predominance of obedience and service. So he has a natural inclination for service. So service to the members of the four Varṇas by obeying them and by affording them facilities in carrying out their vocational and daily duties, is his natural duty.

What do natural duties mean ?

The temperaments of the soul which is sentient and Prakṛti which is insentient are different. The sentient never undergoes any modifications while Prakṛti being kaleidoscopic ever undergoes modifications. The self (soul or spirit) being a fragment of the Lord is sentient. There is no connection between the sentient and the insentient. But its attachment to the insentient Prakṛti becomes the cause of Its birth in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21). Thus men are born, according to their qualities (modes) because of their attachment, as Brāhmaṇas or Kṣatriyas or Vaiśyas or Śūdras. All of them have a natural inclination to their duties mentioned above. If a person performs these duties having an egoistic notion for enjoyment by having a selfish motive, he is bound. But if he performs them without expecting any reward by giving up selfish motive and egoistic notion, it becomes 'Karmayoga' and he is not bound. Through this Karmayoga (Discipline of Action) he worships the Lord Who has manifested Himself as the entire universe. If he by surrendering himself to God performs spiritual actions (utterance of His name, meditation, good company and study of the scriptures etc.), his actions turn into Bhaktiyoga (The Discipline of Devotion). Then his attachment (affinity to Prakṛti or Nature) is totally renounced, there remains nothing but the Lord. Thus a striver realizes Him. Then all the actions with his body, senses, mind and intellect are performed according to his Varṇa (Caste) and Āśrama (Stage of life) as sanctioned by the scriptures and he is not attached to them. His actions are models for others and his love for the Lord, Who is all-bliss, enhances every moment.

Should one's Varṇa (Caste) be decided by birth or actions? A being is born as a man according to the qualities and actions of his previous birth. So his caste is decided by birth. Thus marriages etc., should be decided by caste. Secondly, for the person whose aim is to receive worldly pleasures, prosperity, luxuries, honour and praise etc., it is obligatory to discharge his duty according to his caste. If he does not do so, he has a downfall. Even the Vedas abandon such a demoralized person at the time of his death, though he has studied the six supplementary branches of sacred science (the Vedas) viz., education (Śikṣā), ritual part of the Vedas (Kalpa), an exposition of the Vedāṅgas (Nirukta), metre (Chanda), grammar (Vyākaraṇa) and astrology (Jyotiṣa). But he whose aim is God-Realization, practises chanting, meditation, adoration, study of the scriptures and performs other spiritual activities in order to attain his aim. In the spiritual discipline spiritual feelings and conduct play a more important role than Varṇa or Caste. Thirdly a striver having the aim of God-Realization, attaching more importance to the spiritual activities, performs his obligatory duty according to his caste and stage of life regarding it as worship to God.

Further in the forty-sixth verse the Lord

explains that He from whom all beings emanate and by whom all this is pervaded—by worshipping Him through the performance of his own duty does man attain perfection. Every person has got this right to perform his duty. The gods, demons, beasts and birds don't possess this natural right, yet it is not forbidden for them because being the fragment of God, they can attain Him. Every being can lay full claim over the Lord. It proves that there is predominance of feelings, discrimination and actions in God-Realization while birth predominates in dealings such as livelihood and marriages etc. So in the Bhāgavata it is mentioned that if a man of the lower caste possesses the virtues of the higher caste, he should be regarded noble, though he is born in the low womb. Similarly in the Mahābhārata also it is mentioned in the dialogue between Yudhiṣṭhira and Nahuṣa that the Śūdra whose conduct is noble should not be regarded as a Śūdra and the Brāhmaṇa who does not perform the duty of a Brāhmaṇa, should not be regarded as a Brāhmaṇa. It means that there is predominance of actions rather than birth.

The scriptures reveal that even the man of the lowest caste can possess the virtues of the people of the highest caste and progress spiritually. So he need not get discouraged. The scriptures encourage a man of the high caste to perform his duty, if he does not perform it. In the Jurisprudence (Smṛti) it is mentioned that the Brāhmaṇas, who eat forbidden food and who are immoral, should not be respected even by words. But the scriptures declare that a devotee to the Lord in spite of belonging to the lowest caste is superior to a learned Brāhmaṇa*. A Brāhmaṇa has been called the mouth of the Lord's cosmic form. It means that he has to impart knowledge and teach and preach to the people of the four Varṇas with his mouth because he possesses knowledge.

A Kṣatriya has been called the arm or hand of the Lord's cosmic form because it is he who protects the people of the four Varṇas (Castes) from enemies. The hand protects the body from dangers and serves it in diseases. So is the duty of a Kṣatriya. In case of anarchy it becomes the duty of all the four castes to protect their kith and kin as well as property.

A Vaiśya has been called the stomach of the Lord's cosmic form. As the stomach receives and digests food and nourishes all the limbs, similarly it is the duty of a Vaiśya to accumulate commodities and to supply them to the people by transporting them from one place to another according to the need and demand of the people. It is he who offers charity to the Brāhmaṇas, pays tax to the Kṣatriyas, brings himself up and remunerates the Śūdra for his labour. By agriculture, trade and cattle-rearing he supplies the need of the four Varṇas.

A Śūdra has been called the foot of the cosmic form of the Lord. As feet carry the weight of the entire body from one place to another, a Śūdra renders service to the people of all the four Varṇas (Castes).

These are the natural duties of the people of the four castes and they involve no difficulty or exertion for them. For duties in more detail vide the books on Jurisprudence and follow those duties (Gītā 16/24).

Though at present the four Varṇas (Castes) are muddled, yet the Brāhmaṇas possess virtues such as serenity, self-control and austerity etc., more than the people of the other three castes. Similarly heroism, vigour and firmness are specially found in the Kṣatriyas

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* (1) The pariah who chants the name of the Lord is noble. The noble men who chant His name have performed penances, oblations, pilgrimages, deeds of virtuous conduct and have studied the scriptures (Śrīmadbhā. 3/33/7).
(2) I hold that a pariah who has surrendered himself to God with his mind, speech, actions, wealth and life-breath is superior to a Brāhmaṇa endowed with twelve qualities who has a disinclination for the lotus-feet of Lord Viṣṇu because the pariah sanctifies his family while the Brāhmaṇa having a disinclination for the Lord because of the pride of his superiority complex can't sanctify even himself (Śrīmadbhā. 7/9/10).
(3) The pariah who remains engrossed in devotion to God is superior to a sage, while a Brāhmaṇa devoid of devotion to Lord Viṣṇu is imferior to a pariah because such a pariah with his kith and kin attains liberation from the worldly bondage while that Brāhmaṇa is hurled into hells.
(4) A pariah who is a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu is superior to a Brāhmaṇa who is not a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu because such a pariah with his kith and kin attains liberation from the worldly bondage while such a Brāhmaṇa goes to hells (Brahmavaivarta, Brahma. 11/39).
(5) If a Śūdra is a devotee of God, he is not a Śūdra, he is the noblest Brāhmaṇa. In fact out of all the Varṇas (Castes) a Śūdra is he who is devoid of devotion to God (Mahābhārata).

while the Vaiśyas are more well-versed in agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade than the people of the other three castes. In the same way a Śūdra has more inclination to render service than the people of the other three castes. Thus the people of different castes have a natural inclination for their duties which are born of their nature even today.

Some ignorant people, who have not studied the scriptures seriously, blame the Brāhmaṇas (the people of the priest class) that they established their superiority while writing the scriptures. They hold that the second position or place went to the Kṣatriyas because of the lordliness and the third to the Vaiśyas as they supplied the needs of the people. The people of these three castes trampled on the Śūdras out of selfishness and pride and asked them to render service to the people of the three castes.

The clarification is that it is written no where that the Brāhmaṇas are superior to the people of the other three castes and so they should lead a luxurious life. Their life is full of renunciation, hardships and penances. Even in the household life a Brāhmaṇa should not accumulate wealth. He should not store up grain more than a full jar and be not attached to mundane pleasures. He should accept charity only after performing religious sacrifices, oblations and other religious rites etc. If he accepts the gift of a cow, he should observe expiation.

When a Brāhmaṇa is invited in order to offer water and food etc., (as a 'Śrāddha') in honour of manes, the Brāhmaṇa invokes the hosts' manes by observing continence and self-control. He performs the rites of offering oblation to the manes according to the scriptural injunction. Then he takes meal in the house of the host. Afterwards he recites the sacred formula of Gāyatrī (A mantra of the Ṛgveda which is to be recited daily by the twice born) in order to purify himself. It is not something creditable for a Brāhmaṇa to take meal on the occasion of 'Śrāddha' or to accept charity. The credit lies in his renunciation. He accepts the host's meal and gift in order to enable the host's manes to attain emancipation rather than for his selfishness.

A Brāhmaṇa can earn his living by five means according to Manusmṛti (Code of Manu)* –

(1) When crop is harvested, a few grains remain scattered here and there. A Brāhmaṇa picks them. Similarly in the grain market where grain is weighed, the grains scattered on the earth are picked by him. The former is known as 'Śiloñchavṛtti' while, the latter as 'Kapotavṛtti'. This sort of livelihood called 'Ṛta' is regarded as the best for him.

(ii) If a host offers him a gift without his request, it is called 'Amṛtavṛtti' or 'Ayācitavṛtti'.

(iii) Getting a gift as a reward by explaining the people the auspicious time for marriage and other rites etc., is called Mṛtavṛtti.

(iv) Earning a living through business is 'Satyānṛtavṛtti'.

(v) If he is unable to earn his livelihood by anyone of the above mentioned means, he can earn it by agriculature by following the ordinance of the scriptures as he should not plough the land with one bullock nor in the scorching heat of the sun and so on. It is called 'Pramṛtavṛtti'. He should eat the food after performing the five daily ceremonies (the study of the scriptures, offering sacrifice to gods, hospitable treatment of guests, offering water to the manes and casting of food on the ground for insects etc) †.

In the Gītā there is mention of the nine natural duties of a Brāhmaṇa and none of them is for earning his livelihood. In the case of a Kṣatriya out of the seven natural duties the two– war and lordliness, are the means of earning his living. In the case of a Vaiśya all the three natural duties – agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade are the means of earning a living. Similar is the case with Śūdra whose only natural duty is service which is a source of earning and for him there are not many restrictions in his food

* Ṛta, Amṛta, Mṛta, Pramṛta and Satyānṛta—these are the five means of earning a Brāhmaṇa's livelihood. He should never earn his living by rendering service to others.

† It is forbidden for a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya to earn his livelihood by rendering service to others (Manusmṛti 4/4, 4/6). But it does not mean that he should not render service to others. He should serve others even the Śūdra. But he should not earn his living by service.

and source of livelihood.

The Lord in the Gītā declares, "Devoted to his own duty man attains perfection" (Gītā 18/45). It means that a Śūdra can attain pefection merely by service, a Vaiśya by agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade, a Kṣatriya by seven duties such as heroism and vigour etc., while a Brāhmaṇa by performing nine duties such as serenity and self-control etc.

Then He declares "By worshipping Him through the performance of his own duty man attains perfection" (Gītā 18/46). In fact a man attains perfection by performing duty as worship to Him without expecting reward. As far as rendering service is concerned, it is a sort of worship. So a Śūdra worships God through service. Thus his worship is doubled. So he can attain perfection more easily than a Brāhmaṇa. Secondly the responsibility goes to the eldest son while the youngest one receives the greatest love without having any responsibility. Here the eldest son is a Brāhmaṇa while the youngest one is a Śūdra.

In fact a man of a high caste has to face difficulty in obeying the scriptural injunction thoroughly and so he attains salvation with difficulty while a man of lower caste attains Him easily. In this context there is a story in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. Once several sages went to Vedavyāsa in order to know his decision about the superiority of a caste (Vaṃa) to others. Vedavyāsa received them cordially and went to take a bath in the Ganges. While bathing he uttered three times "Kaliyuga (Kali age), you are lucky; Women, you are lucky Śūdras, you are lucky." When he came back, the sages asked him how Kali age, women and Śūdras were lucky. He answered "In the Kali age the women and the Śūdras by performing their duties can attain salvation quickly and easily."

One more point needs attention. A man who works for his selfish motive does not deserve respect either in the family or the society. So is the case with the Brāhmaṇas. They have not praised themselves in the scriptures in order to prove their superiority. Noble men always praise and respect other people. The Brāhmaṇas are respected and praised for their virtue of renunciation. So every one should give a serious thought to this topic and should not accuse the saints, sages and Brāhmaṇas who wrote treatises on the scriptures.

The fourfold order of society (viz., the Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra) was created according to the divisions of quality and work (Gītā 4/13). But even if a being has to be born in either a high womb because of a boon etc., or low womb because of a curse etc., he acts according to the nature of the previous birth. It is because of this factor that persons such as Dhundhukārī etc., in spite of being born in high wombs perform evil actions while persons such as Vidura, Kabīra and Raidāsa etc., in spite of being born in low wombs perform virtuous deeds and become greatmen.

Today we should try to get rid of the personal and social evils which are against the ordinance of the scriptures by discrimination, good company and study of the scriptures. We should make our life pure and holy so that we may attain the aim of human life.

Link:–The Lord in the next two verses explains why a man should perform his natural duties.

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।
स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥ ४५ ॥

sve sve karmaṇyabhirataḥ saṁsiddhiṁ labhate naraḥ
svakarmanirataḥ siddhiṁ yathā vindati tacchṛṇu

Devoted to his own duty, man attains perfection (God-Realization). How he, devoted to his own duty, attains perfection, that do thou hear. 45

Comment:

'Sve sve karmaṇyabhirataḥ saṁsiddhiṁ labhate naraḥ'—The study of the Gītā reveals that a man's nature may lead him to salvation if he remains free from attachment and aversion as well as the fruit of action. If a man performs his natural duties scrupulously without self-interest and attachment, the impetus to action calms down and he becomes detached from objects and actions etc. So a striver gets established in the self which is natural. Then he is naturally attracted towards the Lord. A man should perform his duty promptly and enthusiastically for the welfare of others. By doing so he experiences a sort of pleasure, called, 'Abhirati' for action. But if an action is done with attachment, having an eye on its return—this is called 'Āsakti' for action. The former leads him to perfection (salvation) while the latter leads him to bondage.

In this context in 'Sve sve karmaṇi', 'Sva-karmaṇā tamabhyarcya', 'Svabhāvaniyatam karma' and 'Sahajam karma' etc., the term 'Karma' (Action) has been used in singular number. It means that if a man performs an action or several actions promptly and enthusiastically in order to realize God, all his actions merge in that aim of God-Realization. It means that all of them are conducive to God-Realization. As the Ganges having risen in the Himālayas flows to the Gangā-Sāgara. On the way several streams, drains and small rivers join it and they become the Ganges. Similarly all the actions of the person whose aim is to attain God join that aim. But he who is attached to actions and who has a desire for several rewards by performing an action or several actions, instead of God-Realization, the intellect of such an undecided person is scattered in many directions and is endlessly diverse (Gītā 2/41) and he can't attain perfection.

'Svakarmaniratah siddhiṁ yathā vindati tacchṛṇu' —The Lord exhorts Arjuna to hear from Him and grasp properly how a man, who is devoted to his duty, attains perfection (God-Realization).

An Important Fact

Even a servant who is paid wages, renders service to his master but his service is limited to actions and fixed hours. But it can't be called real service. When a man considers others venerable either through birth or learning or caste or stage of life or capability or status or virtues, he has only one central idea how they should get comforts and how they should be pleased. To render service to them according to their will and taste for their pleasure is called real service. The servant in such service has no self-interest and ego. He looks only at the interest of the people whom he has to serve—this is real service. The real service involves the feelings of a devotee. His only aim is to please the Lord keeping in mind only His taste. The same service if rendered with hearty devotion becomes adoration. Smearing the forehead with sandalwood paste, offering flowers, garlanding and offering of prayers and praises and such other activities of devotion are included in adoration. When a devotee either beholds his master, or the Lord, touches His feet, his body is thrilled and he feels much delighted. When his body is thrilled, there may be a bit slackness in his service to his master (preceptor or the Lord), but it purifies his heart and enables him to behold the Lord or to realize Him. When this devotion enhances, a devotee attains God-Realization immediately. Such a devotee always thinks how to provide happiness and comfort to his master or preceptor or God without thinking of his own happiness and comfort at all. By doing so he is highly delighted.

All the activities of such a devotee whether they are performed with his physical or subtle or causal body become worship of the Lord. Even his daily routine and his eating, drinking etc., becomes the material of his worship.

As a follower of the Discipline of Knowledge always thinks that he does nothing, similarly a

staunch devotee worships God by performing several duties only for God's sake and in that state his egoistic notion is renounced.

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम्।
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥ ४६ ॥

yataḥ pravṛttirbhūtānāṁ yena sarvamidaṁ tatam
svakarmaṇā tamabhyarcya siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ

He from Whom all beings evolve and by Whom all this is pervaded—by worshipping Him through the performance of his own duty, man attains perfection. 46

Comment:

'Yataḥ pravṛttirbhūtānāṁ yena sarvamidaṁ tatam'—The Lord from Whom the entire universe emanates, Who conducts it, Who is the creator, base and illuminator of all beings and objects, Who existed before the creation of infinite universes and will exist when all the universes perish and Who pervades infinite universes, should be worshipped through the performance of one's own duty according to one's Varṇa (Caste).

'Svakarmaṇā tamabhyarcya'—According to Manusmṛti (Code of Manu) the six duties of a 'Brāhmaṇa are—study, teaching, performance of religious sacrifice, performing it for others as a priest, accepting charity and offering charity. Out of them teaching, performing the religious sacrifice for others as a priest and accepting charity—these three are the means of his living while study, performance of religious sacrifice and offering charity are his duties. Through these six duties as well as through the nine duties mentioned in the verse forty-two of this chapter and also through other activities such as eating, drinking, going, sleeping etc., he should worship the Lord Who pervades all beings. It means that he should serve all beings regarding them as the manifestation of the Lord in order to please Him without expecting any reward.

Similarly protection of the subjects, offering charity, performance of religious sacrifice, study and detachment from sensual pleasures—these five are the duties of a Kṣatriya mentioned in the code of Manu. A Kṣatriya through these five duties, and seven duties mentioned in the forty-third verse of this chapter as well as through the activities of daily routine such as eating, drinking etc., should worship the Lord Who has manifested himself as beings.

A Vaiśya through religious sacrifice, study, offering charity, charging interest, agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade and all other activities should worship the all-pervading Lord. Similarly a Śūdra through service and all other activities should worship the all-pervading Lord without expecting any reward.

All the duties of men mentioned in the scriptures according to their Varṇa (Caste or Social order) and Āśrama (Stage of life) are meant to worship the cosmic form of the Lord. If a striver while performing his activities thinks that he is worshipping the Lord with his activities, all those activities are included in the worship to the Lord. Grandfather Bhīṣma on the battle-field worshipped Lord Kṛṣṇa with arrows through his duty of a warrior. With his arrows Lord Kṛṣṇa's armour was broken, He was injured and it became difficult for Him to hold the bridle of the horses of the chariot. At the last moment of his life Bhīṣma thinks of the same Lord and concentrates his mind on Him—"Let my mind and intellect concentrate on Lord Kṛṣṇa Whose armour is broken with my sharp arrows, Whose body is injured, Whose face is adorned with perspiration because of exertion, and

Whose beautiful curl is stained with dust raised by the jump of horses."

A striver should worship the Lord through mundane and spiritual activities but he should not be attached either to the activities or the instruments and means by which they are performed because attachment (the sense of mineness) makes things impure and filthy and so they can't be offered to God; they can't be used for his worship. So a striver should think that whatever he possesses belongs to the omnipresent Lord and he as His instrument has to worship Him with the resources bestowed upon him by Him. Thus all his activities become worship to the Lord otherwise not.

'Siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ'— It means that a person who worships the Lord through the performance of his own duty, by being free from his connection with Prakṛti (Nature), gets established in the self. Then because of the past influence of his surrender to the Lord, his exclusive devotion to the Lord is aroused. In that case nothing remains to be achieved by him.

Here the term 'Mānavaḥ' (Man) stands not only for the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, Śūdras or for the celibates, householders, people of retired order and renounced order but also for all the people of different religions and sects etc., such as the Hindus, the Muslims, the Christians, the Bauddhas, the Parsees and the Jews etc. As a mother becomes pleased with the different activities of her sons, similarly the Lord is pleased with the activities of men by regarding those activities as worship to Him.

Lord Kṛṣṇa in the seventieth verse of this chapter declares, "He who studies this sacred dialogue of ours, by him I shall be worshipped through the sacrifice of knowledge (wisdom), so I hold." It shows that if a person studies the Gītā, the Lord considers it His worship. Similarly when a person by having a disinclination for the perishable world, has an inclination for the Lord, He accepts it as worship to Him.

An Important Fact

Through Karmayoga (the Discipline of Action) a devotee is detached from Matter while through Bhaktiyoga (the Discipline of Devotion) he has an inclination for God. A Karmayogī serves the world with his body, senses, mind and intellect by abandoning his selfishness, pride and desire. By doing so the flow of his actions is towards the world and the impetus to act calms down, his assumed attachment to these things is renounced and his natural detachment is revealed.

A devotee following the Discipline of Devotion worships the Lord through the performance of his natural duties as well as the spiritual duties such as chanting His name, meditation and adoration etc. Thus he develops an inclination for God having a disinclination for Matter and his love enhances.

A devotee from the outset surrenders himself to God exclusively. So all his mundane and spiritual activities are automatically surrendered to Him. Outwardly the mundane activities seem different from the spiritual ones but actually there is no difference between the two.

At last a Karmayogī and a Jñānayogī also become one. As a Karmayogī becomes detached by serving the world having no selfishness, pride and desire, so does a Jñānayogī through knowledge (wisdom) offer all his activities to Prakṛti (Nature) and becomes detached*. Thus both of them become free from the bondage of actions. The actions of a Karmayogī are dissolved entirely (Gītā 4/23) while the fire of knowledge reduces all actions of a Jñānayogī to ashes (Gītā 4/37). Thus he gets freedom. If he does not enjoy this freedom, he becomes totally indifferent to this freedom. Then by God's grace divine love can be revealed in him.

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* It is inevitable for all the strivers whether they follow the Discipline of Action or that of Knowledge or of Devotion to get detached from the world. In the Gītā there is mention of this detachment for a Karmayogī in 5/11, for a Jñānayogī in 18/26 and for a Bhaktiyogī in 11/55.

Link:—The Lord in the next two verses explains that a striver need not lose heart while worshipping the Lord through the performance of his duty even if there remains any defect in his performance.

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात्।
स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम्॥ ४७॥

śreyānsvadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharmātsvanuṣṭhitāt
svabhāvaniyatam karma kurvannāpnoti kilbiṣam

Better is one's own duty, though devoid of merit than the duty of another well-performed. He who performs the duty ordained by his own nature incurs no sin. 47

Comment:

'Śreyānsvadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharmātsvanuṣṭhitāt'—Here the term 'Svadharma' denotes one's duty according to one's Varṇa (Caste).

A man having the aim of God-Realization has to perform his duty according to what he thinks himself to be. If he thinks that he is a man, he has to perform his duty as a man. If he thinks that he is a teacher or a student, he has to teach or study. Similarly if he holds that he is a striver or a devotee or a seeker of knowledge, he has to practise spiritual discipline or devotion or seek knowledge whole-heartedly.

Similarly a man has to perform his duty according to his Varṇa (Caste) and Āśrama (Stage of life). A Brāhmaṇa's duties are—performance of religious sacrifice, taking charity and teaching etc., in order to earn his living. For a Kṣatriya fighting and lordliness, for a Vaiśya agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade and for a Śūdra service are the duties to earn their living. One's own duty even though devoid of merit is better than the duty of others. The duties prescribed by the scriptures for the people of a particular Varṇa is 'Svadharma' (one's own duty) while the same duty for the people of other Varṇas or castes is Paradharma (Duties of others). Performing religious sacrifice for others as a priest and taking charity etc., are a Brāhmaṇa's own duties as they are sanctioned by the scriptures for him but the same duties are Paradharma for the Kṣatriyas, the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras as they are forbidden by the scriptures for them. But at the time of extreme distress the duties which are forbidden by the scriptures, become duties of the people of all the Varṇas (Castes). For example a Brāhmaṇa can earn his living by agriculture and trade etc., which are the duties of a Vaiśya at the time of extreme distress*.

As far as the natural duties such as serenity and self-control etc., of a Brāhmaṇa are concerned, they are duties for all the members belonging to the four Varṇas because they are prescribed by the scriptures for all of them.

God-Realization is the only aim of human life. So every human is a striver, therefore he has to cultivate all the divine traits in him by renouncing the demoniac ones. Everyone is free and strong enough to abandon the demoniac traits and to develop the divine ones. No one is dependent, weak and ineligible in it. According to their temperaments different persons may possess different divine traits. A person may have predominance of forgiveness in his nature,

* At the time of distress a Brāhmaṇa can earn his living through the profession of a Kṣatriya and at the time of extreme distress through the profession of a Vaiśya. But a Brāhmaṇa should plough the land with two bullocks instead of one and work in the field in the morning and evening when it is cool. Moreover he should not deal in sugar, butter, oil and salt etc.
: Similarly a Kṣatriya can earn his living through the profession of a Vaiśya and a Vaiśya through the profession of a Śūdra.

in another there may be forgiveness only on asking for it. In some other person there may be predominance of compassion, while in another person there may be compassion on thought. Such differences may remain.

'Svabhāvaniyatam karma kurvannāpnoti kilbiṣam'—In the scriptures two kinds of actions are mentioned—prescribed and prohibited. Out of those prescribed actions, the actions which are performed according to one's caste (Varṇa), or stage of life (Āśrama) time, and circumstances etc., are called 'Niyata Karma'.

One's nature is formed according to the three modes of nature—of goodness (Sattva), of passion (Raja) and of ignorance (Tama). The actions which are performed according to that nature are called 'Svabhāvaniyata Karma'. They are also known as natural duties—duties born of nature, one's own duties and innate duties etc.

A being is born in a particular Varṇa (Caste) according to the qualities and actions of his previous birth. The actions perish but their impression (Saṁskāra) continues. So in the life he is born with that nature which he inherits. The Lord (in Gītā 18/48) declares that though all undertakings are tainted with blemish, yet a person should perform his duty according to his Varṇa (Caste) as sanctioned in the scriptures for the welfare of others by giving up his selfishness and pride. By doing so he incurs no sin. Similarly he, who performs actions for the maintenance of the body alone, incurs no sin (Gītā 4/21).

An Important Fact

Now a doubt rises whether a person born in the family of a butcher should not abandon his duty of slaughtering animals. Does a butcher not incur sin? Can he attain salvation by performing such a forbidden action?

The explanation is that natural duty is that which is not forbidden and which is not harmful to anyone. The actions which are harmful or injurious to others can't be called one's natural duties. They are performed out of attachment and desire. A forbidden action is always an evil and so it must be abandoned because it is a demoniac trait, while the virtuous actions are divine traits. A man may have a mere thought of committing evils because of the past impressions, but that thought can't compel him to perform evil actions. That inclination can be rooted out through discrimination, virtuous thoughts, good company and study of the scriptures etc. Reasoning also reveals that no one wants to be injured and slaughtered. So no one has a right to injure and slaughter others. If a person wants other persons to do good to him, he should also do good to others. The scriptures also reveal that any sin or unjust action is not natural, it is born of an evil. In the third chapter Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, "Impelled by what does a man commit sin even involuntarily as though driven by force?" The Lord replied, "It is desire, it is wrath, born of the mode of passion which impels a man to commit sins"(3/36-37). The actions which are performed out of desire, wrath, selfishness and pride are not pure, they are rather impure.

The actions which are performed in order to attain God are not defective even though they may be different for people of different castes. Having realized God a Brāhmaṇa will observe purity and sanctity in the preparation of food and in having it. But a person of a low caste having realized God will not observe purity and sanctity like a Brāhmaṇa. He will eat the food which is left on the plate after a meal while a Brāhmaṇa will not eat it. So the actions of the liberated souls are faultless. Their nature is pure because they are free from either attachment or aversion.

A man is born in the family of a butcher in order to reap the fruit of his sinful actions. He is not born there in order to commit sins. In the Yogadarśana (One of the six schools of Hindu philosophy) the sinful action bears fruit in the form of caste, age and suffering but it does not force that man to perform new sinful actions (Yogadarśana 2/13). He is free in performing actions. If his heart becomes pure, he can't slaughter animals. A person asked a saint, "What should a butcher, who considers slaughtering the animals his profession, do?" The saint replied, "If he goes on chanting the name of the Lord with sanctity for three years,

he will find himself unable to perform his duty as a butcher. He will scorn this action and then he will give it up." He will not be able to slaughter animals, if he wants to realize God from his heart because his heart will change and virtues will be revealed in him.

In the Rāmacaritamānasa Lord Rāma says to Śabarī, "Listen to the nine kinds of devotion which I am going to describe" (3/35/4). Afterwards He declared, "You very well possess all kinds of devotion" (3/36/4). It means that Śabarī did not know the nine kinds of devotion, though she possessed all of them. Through adoration, meditation and good company we develop virtues which we are not aware of. So a man should make his nature pure and he is capable of making it pure. He finds himself incapable because of his attachment to the mundane pleasure and prosperity. Those who hold discourses to preach others can't be virtuous unless they themselves translate those preachings into practice by making their nature pure, having the aim of God-Realization.

The Lord has bestowed this human body so that human beings may attain salvation by purifying their nature. They can purify their nature, it is neither impossible nor difficult. This human body has been called the gateway to salvation (Mānasa 7/43/4). Had it been impossible to purify the nature, how could have this human body been called the gateway to salvation? There is no use of this human life, if a man can't purify his nature.

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत्।
सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ॥ ४८ ॥

sahajaṁ karma kaunteya sadoṣamapi na tyajet
sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa dhūmenāgnirivāvṛtāḥ

One should not abandon, O Arjuna, one's innate duty even though it may be defective, for all undertakings are clouded by defects as fire by smoke. 48

Comment:

[In the preceding verse the Lord declared, "He who performs his duty ordained by his own nature incurs no sin." It means that the duty ordained by one's own nature also involves sin. Therefore, the Lord here declares, "The natural duties even though defective should not be abandoned because all of them are clouded by defects as fire by smoke".]

'Sahajaṁ karma kaunteya sadoṣamapi na tyajet'—The duties ordained by one's own nature are called innate duties. A Brāhmaṇa's innate duties are serenity and self-control etc., a Kṣatriya's heroism and vigour etc., a Vaiśya's agriculture and cattle-rearing etc., and a Śūdra's service.

The duties ordained by one's own nature have the following defects:–

(1) God and the soul, His fragment, both are one's own (Sva) while Prakṛti (Matter) and its evolute, body etc., are different (Para). But the self, a fragment of God being overpowered by Prakṛti becomes a slave to it. In other words all activities are taking place in Nature. But, he by assuming affinity with Nature holds that they are taking place in him. Thus he becomes a slave to it. To be such a slave is a great mistake.

(2) Every action involves violence in one way or the other.

(3) Every action which is desirable to one is undesirable to some one else. This undesirability is a defect.

(4) An action may not be performed well because of heedlessness or an error.

A person should not abandon his innate duty even though it may be defective. For example a Kṣatriya's or a Vaiśya's actions are not to be as virtuous and polite as those of a Brāhmaṇa. But the Kṣatriyas or the Vaiśya's are not held responsible for those defects and for violence which their activities involve.

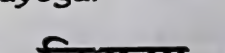
They rather derive the benefit out of them by performing them because they are sanctioned by the scriptures and are easily performed as they suit their temperament.

Alms is the means of a Brāhmaṇa's living. It seems free from any defect but it is defective. Suppose a beggar is standing at the door of a householder and another beggar reaches there. He is a kind of burden on the householder. There can be jealousy between the two beggars. If food materials are not prepared, the householder feels sorry. Suppose a householder does not want to offer anything, so he suffers pain after seeing the beggar. If he offers anything he has to incur expenses. But if the beggar or the Brāhmaṇa returns empty handed, the householder incurs sins. So he gets entangled in a dilemma. Thus though alms involves blemish, yet a Brāhmaṇa should not abandon it.

A Kṣatriya has to kill the warriors of the army of the enemy. But he incurs no sin because it is his innate duty which is prescribed by the scriptures. Similarly agriculture, the duty of a Vaiśya involves violence of several insects and germs. But a Vaiśya incurs no sin as it is his innate duty which is sanctioned by the scriputres. So the innate duties should not be abandoned.

Though men by performing innate duties incur no sin, how will those duties lead them to salvation? In fact these are the evil propensities such as desire, attachment, selfishness and pride which bind a man and because of them a man incurs sin. So if he performs these duties for God's sake by abandoning these evil propensities without expecting any reward, he will not be bound.

'Sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa dhūmenāgnirivāvṛtāḥ'—As there is smoke at the beginning when fire is burnt, similarly all the undertakings are enveloped by defects as their performance depends on incidents, circumstances and occasion etc., and they may be undesirable to others. So the man who performs these duties without expecting any reward, incurs no sin. Therefore, the Lord seems to be saying to Arjuna. "Brother ! It is thy duty to wage war, which you regard as dreadful for there is nothing more welcome for a man of the warrior class than a righteous war" (Gītā 2/31).



Link:–Now the Lord while introducing the topic of Sāṅkhyayoga describes the man who is qualified to practise Sāṅkhyayoga.

असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।
नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥ ४९ ॥

asaktabuddhiḥ sarvatra jitātmā vigataspṛhaḥ
naiṣkarmyasiddhiṁ paramāṁ saṁnyāsenādhigacchati

He whose intellect is unattached everywhere, who has subdued his body, from whom desire has fled – he by renunciation, attains the supreme state of actionlessness through Sāṅkhyayoga (the Discipline of Knowledge). 49

Comment:

Saṁnyāsa (Sāṅkhya) Yoga is the means to attain the supreme state. Now the Lord describes the three factors which enable a man to practise Sāṅkhyayoga (the Discipline of Knowledge).

(1) **'Asaktabuddhiḥ sarvatra'** — His intellect remains unattached to incidents, circumstances, things, actions and persons etc.

(2) **'Jitātmā'**— He has subdued his body i.e., he is not overpowered by heedlessness and indolence etc., rather he overpowers them. He performs the prescribed duties promptly and abstains from forbidden actions.

(3) **'Vigataspṛhaḥ'**— He has no desire even to get the bare necessities of life such as water, food, clothes and shelter. He is satisfied with what so ever he gets.

It means that the striver who wants to follow the Discipline of Knowledge (Sāṅkhyayoga) has to renounce his attachment to Matter and then he is endowed with the above mentioned three qualities. If he is unattached, his body, senses and mind are subdued and when they are subdued, he becomes free from desires. Then he becomes qualified to practise Sāṅkhyayoga (The Discipline of Knowledge).

'Naiṣkarmyasiddhiṁ paramāṁ saṁnyāsenādhigacchati'—Such a man whose intellect is unattached everywhere, who has subdued his self, from whom desire has fled—he by renunciation, attains the supreme state viz., God-Realization. The reason is that actions take place in Prakṛti (Matter), not in the self. When a striver (the self) has not the least attachment to that action, the action or its fruit does not affect him at all. So the natural state of detachment and actionlessness is revealed.

Link:–Now the Lord promises to discuss the process through which man attains the supreme state of actionlessness.

सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्नोति निबोध मे ।
समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥ ५० ॥

siddhiṁ prāpto yathā brahma tathāpnoti nibodha me
samāsenaiva kaunteya niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā

Know from Me in brief, O Arjuna, how he, who has attained perfection, (purification of the inner sense) attains Brahma (the Eternal or the Absolute), that supreme state of knowledge. 50

Comment:

'Siddhiṁ prāpto yathā brahma tathāpnoti nibodha me'—Here the term 'Siddhim' (Perfection) denotes purification of the inner sense (viz., mind and heart) which was discussed in the preceding verse by the expressions 'Asakta-buddhiḥ' (Unattached intellect)' 'Jitātmā' (Subdued body) and 'Vigataspṛhaḥ' (Freedom from desires). Such a person whose inner sense is purified has no desire for or attachment to anything, circumstance or person. Nothing remains to be achieved by him. So it has been said that he has attained perfection.

A worldly person thinks that he has attained perfection if his desires are satisfied and he has attained accomplishments (Siddhis) such as Aṇimā (that which makes a Yogī infinitely small and invisible) etc. But in fact this is not perfection, because satisfaction (fulfilment) of one desire gives birth to other desires. These desires prolong and they bind him. Real perfection consists in total freedom from desires.

The striver who has attained perfection in the form of purification of the inner sense, attains Brahma. Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna to hear from Him the important factors in brief because they are indispensable for the striver who wants to practise the Sāṅkhyayoga.

The term 'Nibodha' (Know) denotes that in the Discipline of Knowledge, action and material are not so important as is knowledge. So the term 'Nibodha' has been used here as well as in the thirteenth verse of this chapter in connection with a 'Sāṅkhayogī'.

'Samāsenaiva kaunteya niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā'—'Parāniṣṭhā' is the final stage of Sāṅkhyayoga (The Discipline of Knowledge). Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to know after hearing from Him in brief how a striver following the path of Knowledge attains Brahma (the Eternal), that supreme state of knowledge.

Link:—The Lord in the next three verses describes the virtues with which a striver should be endowed in order to attain Brahma (The Eternal or the Absolute).

बुद्ध्या विशुद्धया युक्तो धृत्यात्मानं नियम्य च ।
शब्दादीन्विषयांस्त्यक्त्वा रागद्वेषौ व्युदस्य च ॥ ५१ ॥
विविक्तसेवी लघ्वाशी यतवाक्कायमानसः ।
ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः ॥ ५२ ॥
अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम् ।
विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥ ५३ ॥

buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto dhṛtyātmānaṁ niyamya ca
śabdādīnviṣayāṁstyaktvā rāgadveṣau vyudasya ca
viviktasevī laghvāśī yatavākkāyamānasaḥ
dhyānayogaparo nityaṁ vairāgyaṁ samupāśritaḥ
ahaṅkāraṁ balaṁ darpaṁ kāmaṁ krodhaṁ parigraham
vimucya nirmamaḥ śānto brahmabhūyāya kalpate

Endowed with a pure intellect, firmly restraining the senses, turning away from sound and other objects of sense, casting aside attraction and aversion, dwelling in solitude, eating but little, controlling speech, body and mind, ever engaged in meditation and concentration, resorting to dispassion, having abandoned egoism, force, arrogance, desire, anger, covetousness (accumulation), devoid of the notion of mineness and tranquil in mind — such a man becomes qualified to attain Brahma. 51–53

Comment:

'Buddhyā viśuddhayā yuktaḥ'— The striver of Sāṅkhyayoga who wants to realize God should be endowed with a pure or Sāttvikī intellect (Gītā 18/30). There should be not doubt in this intellect. In the Discipline of 'Sāṅkhya' 'Buddhi' (intellect) is given priority. Discrimination which is very essential for a striver is revealed in pure intellect. It is by this discrimination that he severs his connection with Matter.

'Vairāgyaṁ samupāśritaḥ' —As the worldly people depend on objects and persons out of attachment or passion, a striver of Sāṅkhyayoga remains detached. He has no attachment to worldly persons, and places etc., worldly and celestial pleasures have no charm for him.

'Viviktasevī'— Such a striver has a natural inclination to live in solitude. This inclination is praiseworthy. But if a striver does not get such an opportunity to live in solitude, he should not be perturbed. This perturbation shows importance of worldly things in his mind. This importance of the world causes further perturbation of the mind which is an obstacle to meditation. He should remain equanimous both in solitude and a crowded place.

Solitude is conducive to concentration, meditation and purification of heart. But it also provides good opportunity to drowsiness and relaxation. Moreover a striver derives pleasure out of the praise and honour won through his residence in a lonely place. These are the stumbling blocks to the progress of a striver. So he should be on guard against them.

'Laghvāśī' —A striver should take regulated diet. He should eat those articles of food which suits his body. Secondly he should not take too much food, he should eat as much as is indispensable for the

body. It should not be taken in order to nourish the body but only to satisfy hunger like medicine. Such food is easily digestible and is suitable for spiritual practice. Thirdly it should be pure or Sāttvika.

'Dhṛtyātmānaṁ niyamya ca' —He should firmly restrain the intellect from worldly temptations and should not allow it to deviate from the aim of God-Realization. By such unswerving or Sāttvika firmness (Gītā 18/33) he should control his senses and should not let them run after worldly enjoyments any time.

'Yatavākkāyamānasaḥ' —He should control his body, speech and mind (Gītā 17/14-16). He should not indulge his body in any futile pursuit such as loitering here and there and journey for pleasure etc. His speech should be truthful, agreeable and necessary, free from reproach and scandal etc. The mind should be utilized in the thought of the Lord, rather than the world.

Śabdādīnviṣayāṁstyaktvā'— A striver should withdraw the senses of sound, touch, form (sight), taste and smell from their respective objects because a striver whose senses are not turned away from their objects can't practise meditation. If he enjoys sense-objects in an attached spirit, he will dwell on sense-objects during meditation and he will not be able to meditate.

'Rāgadveṣau vyudasya ca' —A man is attached to persons and things regarding them as useful for him. If anyone creates an obstacle to the attainment of any worldly object, he automatically hates him. If he is attached to something desirable, he has an automatic aversion to the undesirable one. A man is bound both by attachment and aversion because he goes on thinking of the two. So he should cast aside attraction (attachment) and aversion.

'Dhyānayogaparo nityam'— A striver should be ever engaged in meditation and concentration. During the fixed hours of meditation he should practise meditation while during the period when he discharges his professional and other practical duties, he should believe that there is no other existence besides the Lord (Gītā 18/20).

'Ahaṅkāraṁ balaṁ darpaṁ kāmaṁ krodhaṁ parigrahaṁ vimucya'— A person has the egoistic notion by regarding himself superior to others because of his virtues. It is called 'Ahaṅkāra'. The force to bring others under one's sway in a wrongful manner is called 'Bala'. The vain consciousness of one's property and riches etc., is known 'Darpa' (Arrogance). The desire for obtaining the worldly pleasures, prosperity and favourable circumstances is 'Kāma'. The feeling of excitement or provocation (a kind of burning sensation) to do wrong to others because they have been the stumbling blocks to our selfishness and pride is 'Krodha' (Anger). Covetousness and accumulation of things and objects for enjoyment is 'Parigraha'*. A striver abandons the above mentioned egoism, force, arrogance, desire, anger and covetousness.

'Nirmamaḥ'—'Nirmamaḥ' is he who renounces the notion of mineness in things, body, mind and senses etc. In fact the things, persons and the so-called our bodies were not ours a hundred years ago and will not remain ours after a hundred years. We can assume the persons as ours in order to have dealings with them and we can make the right use of the things but it is wrong to regard them as ours for ever. If we don't regard them as ours, we become free from the notion of mineness.

'Śāntaḥ' —Tranquillity of mind is disturbed by assuming affinity with the world. If this affinity is renounced, the striver will remain tranquil in mind because attachment or aversion disturbs the peace of mind.

'Brahmabhūyāya kalpate'— The striver who is devoid of the notion of mineness and is tranquil in mind becomes qualified to attain Brahma i.e., as soon as his affinity with the unreal is renounced, he becomes worthy of attaining Brahma. The reason is that this affinity with the unreal is the obstacle, to attainment of Brahma viz., God-Realization.

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* A celibate, a man of the retired order (Vānaprastha) and a man of the renounced order (Saṁnyāsī) must not accumulate objects and things. If a householder accumulates objects and money etc., in order to render service to others that is also not 'Parigraha'.

Link:–The Lord in the next verse explains the marks of such a striver who becomes qualified to attain Brahma and also points out what he attains further.

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥ ५४ ॥

brahmabhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu madbhaktiṁ labhate parām

Having become one with Brahma, and being tranqil (cheerful) in mind, he neither grieves nor desires. Regarding all beings as alike he attains supreme devotion to Me. 54

Comment:

'Brahmabhūtaḥ'—When mind does not attach importance to the perishable, its evil propensities such as egoism and pride etc., are renounced. Then the man has no feeling of 'mine' for them. Then he does not accumulate or hoard things for pleasure. When he is not attached to pleasures and prosperity etc., naturally the mind becomes tranquil.

Thus when a striver transcends the unreal, he becomes qualified to attain Brahma. Then he becomes one with Brahma and he realizes this fact that he is Brahma. This state is called 'Brahmabhūtaḥ' here as well as in (5/24).

'Prasannātmā'— When the mind attaches importance to the unreal things, the man desires to obtain those things. This desire disturbs the peace of mind. But when importance is not attached to the unreal things, a striver's mind remains calm and cheerful. The reason is that in the eyes of such a Yogī the world ceases to exist, only Brahma exists.

'Na śocati na kāṅkṣati'— Such a Yogī who has attained oneness with Brahma does not grieve at the heaviest loss nor does he crave for favourable circumstances. It means that he remains unruffled in perishable circumstances because he does not behold anything other than Brahma.

'Samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu'— So long as a striver does not become free from the pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain, attachment and aversion etc., he can't realize his identity with God. Without realizing his identity with Him, he can't regard all beings as alike. But as soon as he becomes free from the pairs of opposites, he realizes his oneness with God. Then he has no separate personality or existence of his own* he becomes one with Him. Thus he regards all beings as alike in the same way as the Lord is alike to all beings (Gītā 9/29). As in the dream everything is created by the mind, there is nothing except the mind, the mind exists in the creation and the creation exists in the mind. Similarly God as Self abides in all beings and all beings exist in the Self (God) (Gītā 6/29). This is what the Lord means by 'Samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu'.

'Madbhaktiṁ labhate parām'— When a Yogī having realized his identity with God, regards all beings as alike, he has a unique attraction towards God and it enhances every moment. That attraction has been called here 'Parābhakti' (Supreme devotion).

As in the twenty-fourth verse of the fifth chapter there is mention that a Sāṅkhyayogī identified with Brahma attains Brahma Who is all Peace, similarly here a Yogī having realized his identity with Brahma attains supreme devotion to Him.

Link:–In the next verse the Lord points out the reward of supreme devotion.

* When a man accepts his separate existence, it leads him to bondage.

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।
ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥ ५५ ॥

bhaktyā māmabhijānāti yāvānyaścāsmi tattvataḥ
tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśate tadanantaram

Through devotion he comes to know Me in truth, what and who I am; then having known Me in truth, he forthwith enters into Me. 55

Comment:

'Bhaktyā māmabhijānāti'—When a striver is attracted towards God, he surrenders himself to Him and becomes one with Him. He has no separate existence of his own, his egoism in its subtle form also disappears. He attains supreme devotion and then he knows God in truth.

When he realizes his identity with God, his affinity with the world is renounced but he has egoistic notion in its subtle form by thinking "I am Brāhma, I am tranquil, I am free from modifications". Because of this subtle egoistic notion his individuality and dependence persist because egoistic notion is an evolute of Prakṛti (Nature) and Prakṛti is different from the self. This egoistic notion perishes after attaining supreme devotion. As soon as this egoistic notion completely perishes, he knows God in truth.

'Yāvān'—At the beginning of the seventh chapter the Blessed Lord said to Arjuna. "Listen how, practising Yoga, with the mind attached to Me, with complete dependence on Me, thou shalt know Me in full, without any doubt." The same fact was pointed out at the end of the seventh chapter when He declared, "Those who, having taken refuge in Me, strive for deliverance from old age and death know Brahma (the Absolute), Adhyātma (the entire self), entire field of action (i.e., they know Him as attributeless) and also My integral being comprising Adhibhūta (Material field), Adhidaiva (Brahmā) and Adhiyajña (the unmanifest Divinity dwelling in the hearts of all beings as their witness) (i.e., they know Him endowed with attributes)."

Besides knowing Him as attributeless and endowed with attributes, they also know Him in His other forms such as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, Gaṇeśa and Sun etc. Thus he knows what He is.

'Yaścāsmi tattvataḥ'— A devotee comes to know that God is one but He manifests Himself in different forms again and again according to the feelings of the devotees. Thus though a devotee calls a particular form of the Lord, his favourite Deity, He is one and the same.

'Tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśate tadanantaram'— Having known the Lord in truth he immediately enters into Him i.e., attains Him and knows the truth about Him. This is perfection and this is the fruitfulness of human life.

An Important Fact

A man (soul) is automatically attracted towards God. But when he assumes his affinity with Prakṛti (Matter), he is disinclined from God and is inclined to the world. This attraction is called lust or desire or hope or ambition etc.

The thing that is desired is perishable and kaleidoscopic while he (the self) is eternal and unchanging. But he by identifying himself with Prakṛti is attracted towards the kaleidoscopic. This attraction or attachment leads him to the cycle of birth and death. But if he practises any-one of the disciplines of Action, Knowledge or Devotion, he can be free from this cycle of birth and death. If a serious thought is given to these three disciplines, it is found that in all the three there is devotion for God. In the Discipline of Action there is devotion to duty (18/45). (This devotion to duty is at last changed into devotion to the self (2/55, 3/17) and in the case of the man who has the past impressions of devotion for God, his devotion to duty is transformed to his devotion for God). In the Discipline of Knowledge this devotion is to the self (5/24) and in the Discipline of Devotion,

this devotion is for God (10/9)*. So in all the three disciplines the devotion for God has been specially glorified.

A Yogī (who is equanimous) is superior to the ascetics, men of knowledge and men of ritual actions (Gītā 6/46). It means that a Yogī, who has connection with Prakṛti (Matter) in spite of observing austerities, possessing knowledge of the scriptures and performing the Vedic rituals such as holy sacrifice, offering charity and going on a pilgrimage etc., receives the perishable reward while a Yogī attains spiritual realization. Therefore he is superior to the other three. Then the Lord points out that even among Yogīs, the greatest is the devotee (Bhakta) (Gītā 6/47). Here in this context a Bhaktiyogī knows Him fully. A Sāṅkhyayogī through supreme devotion knows Him fully. The same description of His full form has been denoted by the term 'Yāvān.'†

At the beginning of this topic the Lord promised to explain how a man endowed with pure intellect attains Brahma. He explained that a striver engaged in meditation and concentration resorts to dispassion. Then being free from the notion of egoism and mineness he attains tranquillity. One who is tranquil in mind becomes qualified to attain Brahma. In that state, the pairs of opposites such as attachment and aversion, pleasure and pain born of his affinity with the world, totally perish. Then he regards all beings alike and after that he attains supreme devotion. That supreme devotion is the true love. Through that supreme devotion or true love he knows Brahma fully and forthwith enters into him.

A striver through exclusive devotion can know Him in essence, can see Him and can even enter into Him (Gītā 11/54) while a Sāṅkhyayogī can know Brahma in essence, can enter into Him but the Lord is not bound to reveal His vision before Him because he has no desire to behold Him by following the Discipline of Knowledge. But it does not mean that he is in anyway inferior to the striver who through exclusive devotion can behold Him.

Here entrance into Him is that love which is inexpressible and which is said to enhance every moment.‡ This love is the state of perfection in which nothing remains to be known, nothing remains to be done and nothing remains to be achieved. So such a Yogī has neither attachment to action, nor curiosity to know, nor hope to live, nor fear to die, nor greed to receive.

Having become one with Brahma, he possesses subtle egoistic notion that he is Brahma. But this subtle egoistic notion does not lead him to the cycle of birth and death unless he is attached to the modes of nature because attachment to the modes is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21). For example when a man awakes from sound sleep, first of all he thinks 'I am'. Through this thought he is attached to name, form, caste, place and time etc. This egoistic notion becomes the

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* When a man regards a thing as his own, he is automatically attracted towards it. God has been ours since time immemorial. If we realize this fact, we shall be automatically attracted towards Him. That attraction will provide eternal unique bliss to us. Then we shall be free from all evil propensities such as desire, anger, greed, pride and envy etc. All evils are born because spiritual bliss has not been attained.

A man (the soul) has developed a disinclination for God by having attachment to the perishable things and persons etc. But still he has an inclination for Him because in distress and adversity he invokes Him for help and protection.

† The term 'Yāvān' (What He is) has been explained in 7/19 with the declaration 'All this is God.' The same eternal Lord has been explained by distinguishing the real and the unreal, higher and lower natures, spirit (soul) and nature (Prakṛti), the knower of the field and the field and also beyond the real and the unreal (11/37). The same eternal Lord has been explained giving three forms – higher, lower natures and 'I' (7/5-6), the knower of the field, the field and 'Me' (13/1-2), the imperishable, the perishable and the Supreme Person (15/16-17). Again each of these three has been divided into two – lower nature into actions and things, higher nature into spirit and Brahmā (the creator) and 'I' into attributeless and endowed with attributes.

It can be explained by an illustration. Water can have six different forms – atom as attributeless Brahma, vapour as God with attributes, cloud as Brahmā, drops as common embodied soul, rain as action of creation and ice as element (earth, air, water and fire etc).

‡ This love is free from attributes and desires; it enhances every moment, it can't be divided, it is the subtlest and it can only be experienced.

cause of his good and evil actions. Thus he follows the cycle of birth and death. But when he attains the supreme devotion, this subtle egoistic notion is renounced. A striver of the high rank, who has become one with Brahma, sees the one Imperishable Being in all existences (18/20). But so long as he has affinity with the mode of goodness, after awaking from sleep he thinks 'I am Brahma' or 'All is God'. It means that during sleep he forgets this fact and he remembers it when he awakes. When he transcends the three modes of nature, he realizes that he is free from the state of sleep and wakefulness because both of them take place in nature while he (the self) ever remains the same. So such a liberated soul is neither attached to illumination (wakefulness) and delusion (sleep) nor has an aversion to them (14/22).

Link:–In the first verse of this chapter Arjuna expressed his desire to Lord Kṛṣṇa to know the true nature of renunciation (Saṁnyāsa) and the Discipline of Action (Tyāga). In response to his question Lord Kṛṣṇa from the fourth to the twelfth verses explained abandonment (Tyāga – Karmayoga) and from the forty-first to the forty-eight verses again He explained Karmayoga as well as in brief Bhaktiyoga (Discipline of Devotion). From the thirteenth to the fortieth verses He explained renunciation (Saṁnyāsa or Sāṅkhyayoga) while from the forty-ninth to the fifty-fifth verses He explained Sāṅkhyayoga (Discipline of Knowledge) with the predominance of the tranquillity of mind and also in brief the supreme devotion. Now Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna to perform actions by taking refuge in Him.

सर्वकर्माण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्व्यपाश्रयः।
मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम्॥ ५६॥

sarvakarmāṇyapi sadā kurvāṇo madvyapāśrayaḥ
matprasādādavāpnoti śāśvataṁ padamavyayam

Performing continually all actions whatsoever, taking refuge in Me, by My grace, My devotee attains the eternal imperishable state. 56

Comment:

'Madvyapāśrayaḥ'—Such a devotee instead of depending on actions, their fruits, incidents, things and persons etc., surrendering himself to Him, depends only on Him. He does not regard anything or person as his own. Such a devotee has to make no effort to be free from the bondage of the cycle of birth and death. The Lord Himself straightway rescues him from the ocean of birth and death (Gītā 12/7). He has not to worry about his living or spiritual progress. The Lord takes the full responsibility to attend to his needs (Gītā 9/22). According to His rule even the vilest sinner by taking refuge in Him, not only satisfies the needs of life but also attains the supreme goal (Gītā 9/30-32).

'Sarvakarmāṇyapi sadā kurvāṇaḥ'- The Lord by using the term 'Sarva' with 'Karmāṇi' and the term 'Sadā' with 'Kurvāṇaḥ' means to say that the state which is attained by a meditative Sāṅkhyayogī through meditation by controlling his body, speech and mind, is attained by a Karmayogī devotee while performing mundane, social, physical and spiritual actions, having taken refuge in Him by His grace.

Generally people think that a devotee living in solitude and engaged in devotion, adoration and meditation attains salvation. But how can a man, who is ever engaged in activities like a machine, attain salvation? The Lord clarifies the doubt by announcing "Matprasādāt (By My grace)". It means that he who has taken refuge in Him, attains salvation by His grace. Who can check Him from blessing His devotee with beatitude ?

The Lord regards every human being as His own and so the Divine grace is axiomatic and is ever showered. But so long as a man depends on the world, having a disinclination for God, His grace does not bear fruit for him. But as soon as he starts giving up his dependence on the world, he starts feeling His grace. When he totally depends only on God, he fully realizes His grace.

'Avāpnoti śāśvatam padamavyayam' —The supreme eternal imperishable state can't be attained through actions, efforts and spiritual discipline. It can be attained only by His grace. The same state is named Paramadhāma (Supreme Abode), Satyaloka (the Abode of Brahma, the upper most of the seven worlds), Vaikuṇṭhaloka (the Abode of Lord Viṣṇu), Goloka (the Abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa) and Sāketaloka (the Abode of Lord Rāma) in the path of devotion while emancipation, salvation or Self-Realization in the path of knowledge (Gītā 8/21; 14/27). Where there is God there is His Abode because both of them are one and the same. As God is omnipresent, so is His Abode. As soon as a devotee develops an exclusive devotion for Him, no trace of individuality or limitedness remains and he can behold His Divine sports and His Abode everywhere. But a devotee who holds that the Lord resides in a particular Abode as Goloka or Sāketaloka etc., he is carried to that Abode either by the courtiers of God or sometimes even by God after the death of his physical body.

Link:–By explaining to Arjuna His general rule in the preceding verse, the Lord now orders Arjuna to obey Him.

चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः ।
बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥ ५७ ॥

cetasā sarvakarmāṇi mayi saṁnyasya matparaḥ
buddhiyogamupāśritya maccittaḥ satataṁ bhava

Mentally surrendering all actions to Me, regarding Me as the Supreme Goal, resorting to the Yoga of equanimity, have your mind constantly fixed on Me. 57

Comment:

[In this verse the Lord has laid emphasis on four points:—

(i) Surrender all actions to Me.

(ii) Regard Me as the Supreme Goal (Surrender yourself to Me).

(iii) Renounce your affinity with the world through equanimity.

(iv) Have your mind constantly fixed on Me.]

'Cetasā sarvakarmāṇi mayi saṁnyasya'— A man mentally should regard the body, mind, senses, intellect, things, incidents, actions and persons etc., as belonging only to God. Due to egoism he regards them as his own which is sheer foolishness. The Lord has appointed him an agent to make proper use of the things, persons, body, senses and mind etc., given to him. All the actions whether mundane or spiritual, which are sanctioned by the scriptures, are performed by His will. So he should surrender all of them to Him without having any sense of possession.

'Matparaḥ'— A devotee should think that the Lord is his only Supreme Goal, none else besides Him is his and so he should surrender himself to Him. He has nothing to do at all with the worldly affairs, things and persons etc., because they are different from him. If he regards wealth, family, body, senses and mind etc., as his own, he has to depend on them and thus he becomes a slave to them though he thinks that he is their master.

In fact the Lord is one's own and He has the greatest regard for His devotee. He becomes a servant to him and makes him the jewel of His crown, while the worldly people try to crush him by making him their slave. Therefore a

person surrendering himself to Him should regard Him as the Supreme Goal.

'Buddhiyogamupāśritya'—In the Gītā a lot of importance has been attached to equanimity. If a man becomes equanimous, he becomes a man of knowledge, of meditation, a Yogī and a devotee. But if he is not equanimous, the Lord does not regard him as perfect even though he possesses several other virtues. Equanimity is naturally found in man. But he becomes happy and sad by identifying himself with happy and sad circumstances. So a man should not identify himself with the circumstances. He in fact remains the same while the circumstances appear and disappear. So he should remain established in the self. By remaining established in the self, he will have equanimity. This equanimity is worship to God (Viṣṇu Purāṇa 1/17/90). So the Lord exhorts Arjuna to resort to the Yoga of equanimity.

'Maccittaḥ satatam bhava'— The mind of the devotee, who surrenders himself to God, is surrendered to His feet. Then his natural claim over the Lord is revealed and He takes His seat in his mind. This is fixing of the mind on Him.

The Lord uses the term 'Satatam' (Constantly) with 'Maccittaḥ' to exhort Arjuna to have his mind constantly fixed on Him. When a devotee knows the fact or even assumes that he is God's, his mind is automatically fixed on Him. When a disciple accepts his relationship with the preceptor, he constantly thinks of his preceptor. Even when he does not think of his preceptor, the thought remains established in him because he (the self) has accepted this relationship. As far as his relationship with God is concerned, it has been since time immemorial. But by assuming his affinity with the world he has forgotten the real relationship. So in order to remind him of his real connection with Him, He exhorts him to have his mind constantly fixed on Him.

While performing the mundane activities, a striver should not allow his heart to melt, by being completely absorbed in them. He should keep his heart hard. But while performing spiritual activities such as chanting the Lord's name silently or loudly, adoration and meditation etc., the heart should melt by being absorbed in these activities. By doing so his mind will be quickly fixed on Him.

An Important Fact Pertaining to Love

When a striver mentally surrenders all actions to God, he realizes his real disunion from the world* and when he surrenders himself to God he is eternally united with Him i.e., the Lord becomes the dearest object of his love. As far as the mental state in connection with love (union and disunion) is concerned, it can be of four kinds—union in eternal union, disunion in eternal union, eternal union in disunion and disunion in disunion. They can be explained by an illustration:—

When there is union of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Rādhā that is union in eternal union. When they are united, Śrī Rādhā thinks that Lord Kṛṣṇa has gone away from her and so she cries, "O dear, where have You gone?" This is disunion in eternal union. Lord Kṛṣṇa is not with Śrī Rādhā but she constantly thinks of Him and feels that He is with her. This is eternal union in disunion. Lord Kṛṣṇa has gone out of sight. But Śrī Rādhā thinks that she has not met Lord Kṛṣṇa for a long time. She has a desire to meet Him. This is disunion in disunion.

In fact in all the above mentioned four states there is ever union of the devotee with the Lord, there is no possibility of disunion. This union is called love in which the lover

* In fact a man can never be united with the world. He ever remains disunited from it. When the thought of a thing, which he lacks, comes, to the mind, it is his assumed union with that thing. The lack of the thing makes him sad. But when he receives the thing, it goes out of his mind and this disunion makes him happy. Similarly when a thing is lost or destroyed, a man is sad because he has internal union with it. But if through disinclination he realizes that it was not his and it could not be his, he is not sad. It means that there is external disunion in assumed internal union and there is internal disunion in assumed external union. Thus in fact there is no union of the man with the world, he assumes his union with it by an error of judgment.

and the beloved both remain united. This sport of union and disunion goes on between the devotee and the Lord in order to exchange love.

This sort of love enhances every moment. When the devotee meets the Lord, he is afraid lest He should again disappear*. So he is never satisfied, he is attracted more and more towards Him by thinking lest He should disappear again. Thus love enhances.

In love (devotion) a devotee can have four kinds of sentiment — of service, of friendship, of affection and of conjugal love. Out of these four the sentiment of friendship is superior to that of service, the sentiment of affection is superior to that of friendship while the sentiment of conjugal love is superior to that of affection because His supremacy goes on decreasing from the first sentiment to the fourth one. But out of these four even if one sentiment attains perfection, the remaining three are also included in it. The reason is that the Lord is perfect and so is love for Him and so is the man (soul) being a fragment of the Lord. He remains imperfect because of his affinity with the world. If he develops his love for Him in anyway, this love will become perfect.

In the sentiment of service a devotee regards himself as a servant to the Lord who is his master. So the Master has full control over him and can use his service in anyway according to His own sweet will without consulting him.

In the sentiment of friendship the Lord is the friend of the devotee. The Lord is loving to the devotee while the devotee is loving to God. God has full claim on the devotee and the devotee has full claim on God. So if the devotee satisfies the desire of the Lord, the Lord is also expected to fulfil the devotee's desire.

In the sentiment of affection a devotee thinks that he is the parent or preceptor of the Lord Who is a child and so it is his duty to bring Him up and to look after Him lest he should hurt himself. When Kṛṣṇa went to the forest, Nandabābā and Yaśodā sent Balarāma to look after Him.

In the sentiment of Mādhurya (Conjugal love)† a devotee does not remember the Lord's supremacy. He thinks that he is one with Him because of his intimacy. He thinks to provide Him with every sort of comfort.

Love is miraculous and spiritual. Only the Lord deserves its taste. The lover and the beloved, both are spiritual. In this sentiment of love sometimes the lover becomes the beloved while the beloved becomes the lover. In fact it is the Lord Himself Who becomes two in order to relish love.

Some worldly ignorant people don't understand the true nature of love. They regard lust as love. But lust can be seen in all beings and specially among ghosts, devils, demons and fiends etc. But only the liberated souls deserve love.

In lust both the persons want to receive something or the other from each other while in love a devotee wants to offer everything to the Lord. In lust a person wants to satisfy his senses while in love he wants to serve the Lord without any desire for reward. Lust is physical while love is spiritual. Lust involves delusion and pain while love is totally free from delusion and pain and involves emancipation and infinite bliss. In lust there is attachment and dependence while in love there is relinquishment and independence. Lust is selfish while love is selfless. A lustful man becomes a slave to others while the Lord Himself becomes a slave to the devotee who

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* Both union and disunion enhance love. If there is ever-union of the two, love will not enhance, it will remain the same. Therefore the Lord disappears (conceals Himself) in order to enhance love.

† In the sentiment of Mādhurya (Conjugal love) generally people think that it is the relationship between a man and a woman. But in fact it is not confined to a husband and a wife. 'Mādhurya' means sweetness and that sweetness develops by becoming one with the Lord. The more a devotee identifies himself with the Lord, the more the sweetness develops. So if there is perfection in any one of the sentiments either of service or friendship or affection, there will be perfect sweetness.

There is a difference between 'Abheda' (Non-duality) and 'Abhinnatā' (Identification). In non-duality a devotee regards himself as the Lord while in identification there is internal intimacy in spite of being two as are two intimate friends. The more intimacy a devotee develops, the more sweetness is revealed. This is known as sentiment of love. The Lord reveals Himself in different forms to taste this love.

possesses love. Lust changes into insipidity while love enhances every moment and provides bliss. Lust is born of depression while love is revealed out of the happiness of the beloved. In lust a man wants to derive pleasure while in love a devotee wants to please the Lord. Lust leads to hells while love leads to the abode of God. In lust the man and the woman ever remain two, while in love the devotee and the Lord become one and the same.

Link:—The Lord in the next two verses points out to Arjuna the reward of obeying His command and the harm which would befall him if he did not obey Him. Moreover his resolve of disobedience to Him is not sound.

मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ।
अथ चेत्त्वमहंकारान्न श्रोष्यसि विनङ्क्ष्यसि ॥ ५८ ॥

maccittaḥ sarvadurgāṇi matprasādāttariṣyasi
atha cettvamahaṅkārānna śroṣyasi vinaṅkṣyasi

Fixing thy mind on Me, thou shalt by My grace, overcome all obstacles; but if, from egoism thou wilt not hear Me, thou shalt perish. 58

Comment:

'Maccittaḥ sarvadurgāṇi matprasādāttariṣyasi'— The Lord declares that by fixing his mind on Him, Arjuna will by His grace overcome all obstacles and sorrows without making any effort.

When a devotee surrenders his action and himself to the Lord and has no attachment to the pleasures which are born of sense contacts, the Lord shoulders the responsibility to do away with his evils if they remain in their subtle form and enables him to realize God. So He declares that Arjuna will overcome all obstacles by His grace. It means that a devotee by having a disinclination for the world should have an inclination for God. He has committed an error that he has been attached to the world. If he renounces this attachment and has an inclination for God, the Lord by His grace removes all his obstacles and leads him to perfection.

When a man accepts his affinity with body etc., which are the evolutes of Prakṛti, he has to perform his duty according to his caste and order of life as sanctioned by the scriptures. It is because of this affinity that he incurs sins or performs virtuous deeds and has to receive reward in the form of pain or pleasure. If he develops a total disinclination for Prakṛti and its evolutes and an inclination for God, he is not bound to perform his duty in accordance with his caste and stage of life. Prohibition and prescription don't apply to him because they have their predominance in the domain of Prakṛti. In the domain of the Lord there is predominance of surrender to Him.

Man (self) is a fragment of God (Gītā 15/7). If he proceeds towards Him, he becomes free from the debt of gods, sages, creatures, parents and grand parents (manes)* etc., because the self or the soul has never taken or borrowed anything from them. The self being a fragment of God is perfect. But when it assumes its affinity with the body, it suffers shortage otherwise not — 'The real never ceases to be' (Gītā 2/16). When he does not suffer shortage (want), how can he be indebted to them ? This is overcoming all obstacles.

A striver, who follows the spiritual path, observes the Lord's grace in all the obstacles such as poverty, diseases and also other disturbances in the spiritual path. The Lord removes the obstacles of such a striver who

* 'O King, he who abandoning all actions, takes refuge in the Lord, becomes free from the debt of gods, sages, kith and kin and manes and does not remain a servant to them.

depends only on Him and enables him to attain Him. There is possibility of hurdles being created in the spiritual discipline and in God-Realization. Therefore, the Lord declares that He will remove such hurdles and will lead him to His realization.

'Atha cettvamahaṅkārānna śroṣyasi vinaṅkṣyasi'— The Lord because of His excessive grace to Arjuna, says to him that if he, because of his egoistic notion, does not listen to Him and does not act according to His advice, he will perish. If he does not hear Him out of ignorance or by an error, it is pardonable. But if he does not hear Him out of egoism, he will perish because this egoism will enhance his pride which is the root of demoniac nature.

In the fourth chapter the Lord said to Arjuna, "You are My devotee and friend" (4/3). Again in the ninth chapter He said to him, "Know it for certain, Arjuna, that My devotee never perishes" (9/31). It shows that Arjuna is a devotee to the Lord, so he can never have a disinclination for God and he can never perish. But even if he does not listen to the Lord, he will have a disinclination for Him and therefore he will have a downfall i.e., follow the cycle of birth and death (Gītā 9/3; 16/20).

An Important Fact

In the fifty-sixth verse of this chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, "Taking refuge in Me, by My grace, a devotee attains the eternal imperishable state." Again here He declares, "O Arjuna, by My grace, you will overcome all obstacles." It means that the Lord's grace is more powerful than any spiritual discipline. But it does not mean that Arjuna should not practise spiritual discipline, he should make it a part of his duty to practise it because the only aim of human life is God-Realization. The person who does not realize God, he even on reaching the highest world as that of Brahmā, will have to return from there (Gītā 8/16).* Therefore, having received this human body a man should realize God and be free from the cycle of birth and death. For a Karmayogī also Lord Kṛṣṇa has declared, "Endowed with equanimity a person casts away in this life both good and evil" (Gītā 2/50). It means that the only aim of human life is to be free from bondage viz., the cycle of birth and death.

In the eleventh verse of the tenth chapter the Lord declared, "By My grace I dispel the darkness born of ignorance by the shining lamp of wisdom" while in the forty-seventh verse of the eleventh chapter He said, "By My grace I have shown you this Universal Form." By laying emphasis on His grace here He declares that by His grace the eternal imperishable state will be attained (18/56) and by His grace all obstacles will be overcome (18/58). Having attained the eternal imperishable state there is no possibility of any obstacles. But the Lord lays emphasis on this point in order to remove Arjuna's fear who was thinking that he would incur sin by waging the war, the manes of his race would fall and the age-long caste traditions and family customs would get extinct. He also thought that if the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, armed with weapons, killed him in battle while he was unarmed and unresisting, it would be better for him (Gītā 1/36-46). So the Lord declares that by His grace he will overcome all obstacles i.e., he will neither incur sin in the least nor be bound. But by His grace being purified he will attain the Supreme State.

यदहङ्कारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे ।
मिथ्यैष व्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति ॥ ५९ ॥

yadahaṅkāramāśritya na yotsya iti manyase
mithyaiṣa vyavasāyaste prakṛtistvām niyokṣyati

* O Lotus eyed! Those who have not taken refuge in Your feet and whose intellect has not been purified because of being devoid of Your devotion, though they regard themselves emancipated, yet they are really bound. They even if, through laborious spiritual discipline, reach the high state, fall from there.

If filled with egoism, thou thinkst: 'I will not fight,' vain is this thy resolve, Nature will compel thee. 59

Comment:

'Yadahaṅkāramāśritya'— Cosmic intelligence is born of Prakṛti and egoism is born of cosmic intelligence. Out of egoism a man thinks "I am body." One who is given to such egoism can never be actionless i.e., free from actions because Prakṛti is ever active and subject to change. He, who has assumed affinity with it, can never remain actionless (Gītā 3/5).

When a man due to ego is swayed by ever active Prakṛti, he can't remain actionless. Sometimes he may seem doing physical actions while sometimes abstaining from them. But in both states he does action as his affinity with the body is in tact. When he renounces his affinity with Prakṛti (Body), then whether he performs an activity or not, he is quite actionless viz., detached. Then nothing remains to be done by him. If a devotee takes refuge in the Lord and thus renounces all his connection with the body, he is not helplessly driven to action.

Na yotsya iti manyase'— In the second chapter Arjuna having taken refuge in the Lord prayed to Him, "I am Your disciple. Instruct me who have taken refuge in You" (2/7). Then Arjuna bluntly said to Lord Kṛṣṇa, "I will not fight" (2/9). It was undesirable of him to say so, if he really sought refuge in the Lord. It was desirable for him to say that he would act according to the Lord's bidding. So the Lord thought that instead of taking refuge in Him, he was taking refuge in egoism. Hearing Arjuna's words full of egoism Lord Kṛṣṇa could not help smiling (2/10). But He had excessive love and grace for Arjuna. So He started preaching the sermon in the second chapter. Otherwise He would have said then and there which He said now in the eighteenth chapter 'Do as you wish' (18/63). Further the Lord warned him that if he had taken refuge in Him, he would have not said "I'll not fight." These words pricked the Lord's mind. Through the very same words "I'll not fight" the Lord said to him that his words proved that he had taken refuge in his egoism, not in Him. Moreover by taking refuge he would have not been helplessly driven to action by Prakṛti (Gītā 7/14) because Prakṛti (Nature) compels only that person to action who has not taken refuge in Him (Gītā 7/13).

There is a vital point which needs attention. By having attachment to the objects of nature a man thinks that he is their master. But in fact, he becomes a slave to them as he depends on them. But he does not become a slave to those objects which he does not regard as his own. So he should not regard the objects as his own as they are not his own. He should hold that only the Lord is his. By having this belief he should take refuge in Him. Having taken refuge in Him, he becomes totally independent. But those, who take refuge in egoism, revolve in the path of this world of death (9/3). So the Lord says 'Prakṛtistvāṁ niyokṣyati'— that his nature of being a member of the warrior class, will compel him to fight and he will not be able to refrain himself from the war.

'Mithyaiṣa vyavasāyaste'— Resolve is of two kinds — real and unreal. The resolve of our affinity with God is real while the resolve of our affinity with Prakṛti (Nature) is unreal. In the former there is predominance of the self while in the latter there is predominance of the Prakṛti or sinner sense. So the Lord says to Arjuna that his resolve of not fighting is vain as he is a member of the warrior class. He should depend on the Lord, not on Prakṛti (Nature) and its evolute, the world.

If a being resolves that he belongs to the Lord and so he has to worship Him with exclusive devotion, his resolve is real, true and eternal. The Lord explaining the merit of this sort of resolve declares in the thirtieth verse of the ninth chapter, "Even if the vilest sinner worships Me with exclusive devotion, he should be considered a saint; for he has rightly resolved." The right resolve is that he is God's and so he will adore Him.

'Prakṛtistvāṁ niyokṣyati'— By this expression the Lord means to say that his

nature as a warrior will compel him to fight. The nature of a Kṣatriya (the member of the warrior class) is chivalry and not to flee from the battle-field (Gītā 18/43). So he will not restrain himself from fighting in the righteous war.

Link:–In the previous verse the Lord described that nature would compel Arjuna to perform actions. In the next verse He explains the same point.

स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निबद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा ।
कर्तुं नेच्छसि यन्मोहात्करिष्यस्यवशोऽपि तत् ॥ ६० ॥

svabhāvajena kaunteya nibaddhaḥ svena karmaṇā
kartuṁ necchasi yanmohātkariṣyasyavaśo'pi tat

O Arjuna, that which from delusion you don't want to do, bound by your own acts born of your nature, you will helplessly perform. 60

Comment:

'Svabhāvajena kaunteya nibaddhaḥ svena karmaṇā' —Svabhāva (nature) consists of the total sum of actions and inclinations of the previous birth, the influence of the parents of this birth, the environment and the education he receives. The same nature has been called Svadharma (own duty) — "Considering your own duty you should not waver" (Gītā 2/31).

'Kartuṁ necchasi yanmohātkariṣyasyavaśo'pi tat'— Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that endowed with martial qualities such as prowess and valour etc., of the warrior class being bound by your Kṣatriya nature you will have to do irresistibly what you do not want to perform out of delusion. The scriptures have also sanctioned the duties according to one's own nature. Lord Kṛṣṇa declared, "One's own duty, though devoid of merit, is preferable to the duty of another well performed" (Gītā 3/35; 18/47). So he is bound to perform the act of fighting born of his nature. It is out of delusion that he is thinking not to fight.

The nature of the liberated souls is perfectly pure. So they are not driven to action by their nature. But still they perform actions according to their nature. But common peope are driven to action under the sway of their nature (3/33). So Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that he will also have to perform action of fighting according to the nature of a member of the warrior class but that will not bear good fruit. But if he fights by obeying either the scriptures or the saints or Him, it will lead him to salvation, because this action will be free from attachment and aversion. When a man performs actions in accordance with ordinances of the scriptures, or His order, his attachment and aversion to actions automatically melt away as he has an eye on the ordinance or the order. Thus he is not swayed by attachment and aversion.

An Important Fact

In the Gītā it has been mentioned several times that men act being swayed by their own nature (3/5; 8/19; 9/8). But it has been specially mentioned in 3/33 and here in 18/59.* This proves the predominance of one's own nature. A being's nature accompanies him to his birth in good and evil wombs. If he is pure of nature having no attachment to persons and things etc., he will not be reborn. It is attachment to the modes of nature which is the cause of the birth of the soul (self) in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21).

Now a question arises when a man is compelled to perform actions according to his nature, how will prescription and prohibition of the scriptures be applied? How will the preaching of the preceptors be translated into practice? How will strivers

* In Jñānayoga (the Discipline of Knowledge) the man of wisdom renounces his affinity with Prakṛti (Nature) and so he is not compelled to perform actions by Prakṛti (Nature).

inculcate virtues by discarding evils and vices?

The answer to the above questions is that, as a man can't control the flow of the Ganges but can redirect it, similarly he can't renounce the duty of his caste (Varṇa) but can purify his nature by being free from attachment and aversion by having the aim of God-Realization. It means that a man is powerful and free in purifying his nature.

In the Gītā the Lord has described two disciplines— of action and of devotion to improve one's nature.

(1) Discipline of Action:— In the thirty-fourth verse of the third chapter the Lord declared, "Attachment and aversion are a man's foes. So a man should never come under their sway." It means that instead of performing actions out of attachment and aversion, he should perform them according to the ordinance of the scriptures. If a disciple carries out the behest of his preceptor with zeal and pleasure, his attachment and aversion get obliterated. Similar is the case with the son in relation to his parents, a wife to her husband and a servant in relation to his master. By doing so happily, a man becomes free from attachment and aversion. But if he performs them according to his own sweet will, attachment and aversion are firmly established. When he does not perform forbidden actions, his attachment is rooted out and when he performs only prescribed actions happily though his mind misguides him, his aversion is rooted out.

(2) Discipline of Devotion:— When a man takes refuge in God and becomes merely an instrument in His hand, he performs actions as sanctioned by Him and so attachment and aversion of his nature are rooted out.

It means that in the Discipline of Action when a striver does not come under the sway of attachment and aversion, his nature is purified (Gītā 3/34). In the Discipline of Devotion when a striver takes refuge in Him, his nature is purified (Gītā 18/62). When nature is purified, there remains no cause of bondage.

A man performs actions either by being swayed by attachment and aversion or by following principles. Attachment and aversion are strengthened if he performs them under the sway of attachment and aversion. Thus his nature becomes impure. But, if he acts according to the principles, his nature is purified. The strivers who act according to the ordinance of the scriptures, great men and the liberated souls, having the only aim of God-Realization, set examples and standard for others. So do the great men and the emancipated souls (Gītā 3/21).

Link:—Soul (the self) is a fragment of God and is sentient while nature is self-made and insentient. So how does soul come under the sway of nature? The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥ ६१ ॥

īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānāṁ hṛddeśe'rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmayansarvabhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā

The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing them by His illusive power, to revolve in accordance with their nature as if mounted on a wheel. 61

Comment:

'Īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānāṁ hṛddeśe'rjuna tiṣṭhati bhrāmayansarvabhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā' —The Lord, Who is the impartial controller, sustainer and conductor of all beings, causes those beings to revolve like wooden dolls mounted on a wheel, who

have assumed the body as 'I' or 'mine'.

Just as a man boarding a train goes only to the stations where it arrives and when he gets off it, he has not to go to those stations; similarly so long as a man assumes his affinity of 'I'ness and 'mineness' with this body, the Lord conducts him according to his nature* and he revolves following the cycle of birth and death.

This affinity of 'I'ness and mineness gives birth to attachment and aversion which make the nature impure. This impurity of nature compels him to perform actions. But when he renounces his affinity with the body, his nature becomes purified by being free from attachment and aversion and he is not helplessly driven to action. In that case he is not conducted by the illusive power of the Lord.

Now a doubt arises whether a man is free to act according to his will or does he depend for his actions on any other agency? If he depends on any other agency, how can he perform only those actions which are prescribed by the scriptures?

The answer is that as ice is frozen in a refrigerator and heat is produced in a heater according to their own mechanism though both of the instruments are run by electricity. Electricity has no will and insistence of its own that it would run only a particular machine. But it works every machine. In the same way all beings revolve according to their own nature by drawing inspiration and energy from the Lord. It means that persons of good nature perform virtuous deeds while persons of evil nature perform evil deeds. Thus one's own nature is responsible for the performance of good and evil deeds. But a point needs special attention. A man is free in purifying his nature or in sullying it while other creatures such as birds, beasts and even the gods are not free in improving their nature. The Lord by His grace has bestowed upon us this human body so that we may attain salvation. So a man should attain it by improving his nature.

When the Lord declares that He dwells in the hearts of all beings, He means to say that just as water pervades everywhere under the earth but can be received from the well, similarly the Lord pervades everywhere, yet heart is His special residence. Similarly in the third chapter it has been declared that the all-pervading Lord is always present in sacrifice (Gītā 3/15).

An Important Fact

A striver generally commits an error when he assumes that during adoration, loud-chanting and meditation etc. God is far away from him and He will not be revealed there and He will not be revealed then. Similarly he thinks that he does not deserve God-Realization. God is not merciful to him and so on. So he strengthens the belief that God is far away from him. But he should have the belief that as God pervades everywhere He is in him and in his body, mind, breath and intellect and chanting also. There is no one nearer than He is. By having this belief a striver should practise adoration, chanting and meditation etc.

Now a doubt arises that if we assume that the Lord is in us, the Lord and we will be different. The clarification is that it is our egoistic notion which makes us different from God. If we accept Him as ours we become one with Him and love is revealed.

When the Ganges is flooded, water overflows its banks and is filled in pits etc., which are away from the Ganges. When again it flows in its normal course, the water of the pits is separated from the main course. This water is considered defiled like wine. It is very dirty. Several germs and insects are born in it and they cause diseases. When it is again mixed in the main stream of the Ganges, its impurity, limitedness and unholiness go away and it again becomes pure and holy water of the Ganges.

Similarly when a man out of his egoistic notion develops a disinclination for God,

* Nature dwells in the causal body. The same nature is revealed in subtle body and physical body.

he is full of several impurities such as dependence, hatred, enmity, shortage, disquietude unevenness, limitedness, inertness and unholiness etc. But when again he has an inclination for the Lord and takes refuge in Him Whose fragment he is, all his impurities as his separateness and slavery to the world perish. The reason is that he himself being a fragment of the Lord is free from defects. It is because of his egoistic notion that defects develop in him.

Link:–The Lord in the preceding verse said that the Lord dwelling in the hearts of all beings cause them to revolve as if mounted on a machine. In such case what should a man do in order to get rid of this bondage? The answer comes.

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥ ६२ ॥

tameva śaraṇaṁ gaccha sarvabhāvena bhārata
tatprasādātparāṁ śāntiṁ sthānaṁ prāpsyasi śāśvatam

Take refuge in Him alone with all thy being, O Arjuna. By His grace shalt thou attain supreme peace and eternal abode. 62

Comment:

[A tendency is generally found among people that they don't have faith in the great personalities because of much familiarity with them. But when those great persons leave this mortal world, the people repent of their past actions. Similarly Lord Kṛṣṇa acts as a driver of Arjuna's chariot and obeys him. When Lord Kṛṣṇa says to him that a devotee who takes refuge in Him, by his grace obtains supreme peace and eternal abode and fixing his mind on Him, he will overcome all obstacles, Arjuna does not speak. It may mean that Arjuna has not full faith in the words of Lord Kṛṣṇa. So Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorts him to take refuge in the Lord Who dwells in the hearts of all beings.]

'Tameva saraṇaṁ gaccha' —Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna to 'seek refuge in the Omnipresent Lord Who dwells in the hearts of all beings and Who directs them.' It means that instead of depending on the perishable things, incidents, circumstances and persons etc., he should depend only on the imperishable Lord.

In the preceding verse the Lord mentioned that He causes the beings, who assume the affinity of 'I'ness and 'mineness' with the body, to revolve as if mounted on a machine. Here by using the term 'Eva' (Even) Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna not to have the least affinity of 'I'ness and 'mineness' with the body but seek refuge in God.

'Sarvabhāvena' —It means that Arjuna should think of Him with his mind, should worship Him with his body, and should be pleased in His sweet will, whether desireable or undesirable for him. He should be specially happy with the undesirable circumstances by thinking that the Lord has created such circumstances against him for his welfare in order to enable him to attain salvation.

'Tatprasādātparāṁ śāntiṁ sthānaṁ prāpsyasi śāśvatam' —Lord Kṛṣṇa announced "By My grace one attains the eternal state" (18/56) and "By My grace thou shalt overcome all obstacles" (18/58). The same fact has been pointed out here when He declares, "By the grace of the Lord Who dwells in the hearts, you will obtain supreme peace and eternal abode." In the Gītā supreme peace has been called eternal abode. But here the Lord has used both these expressions together. So here 'Parā śānti' (Supreme peace) should mean total disinclination for the world while Śāśvata sthāna' (eternal abode) should denote the supreme state.

Here Lord Kṛṣṇa has exhorted Arjuna to take refuge in the all-pervading God. So a doubt arises whether Lord Kṛṣṇa is not the all-pervading God.

The clarification is that the refuge (shelter) in the all-pervading Lord has been called more secret than all secrets (18/63) while refuge in Lord Kṛṣṇa has been called the most secret of all. It shows that Lord Kṛṣṇa is greater than the all-pervading God.

Lord Kṛṣṇa also declared, "Though unborn and imperishable and also the Lord of all beings, I manifest Myself through My power, (Māyā)" (4/6); "Having known Me as the Enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities, the Great Lord of all the worlds and the Disinterested Friend of all beings, My devotee attains Me" (5/29); "But those who do not regard Me as the Enjoyer and the Lord of all the worlds, fall" (9/24). It also proves by positive and negative inference that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord.

In this chapter it is mentioned that the Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings (18/61) and in the fifteenth chapter it is mentioned that He (Lord Kṛṣṇa) is lodged in the hearts of all (15/15). It means that the all-pervading Lord and Lord Kṛṣṇa are not two, but both of them are one.

Then why did Lord Kṛṣṇa say to Arjuna "Take refuge in Me alone." The reason is that in the fifty-sixth verse Lord Kṛṣṇa said, "By My grace one attains the eternal imperishable state"; in the fifty-seventh and fifty eighth verses He said, "Surrender to Me. By My grace you will overcome all obstacles." But Arjuna did not speak viz., he did not express his acceptance by words or demeanour. It means that Arjuna did not believe in what Lord Kṛṣṇa said. Then Lord Kṛṣṇa scolded him, "If filled with egoism, thou thinkst: 'I will not fight,' vain is this, thy resolve. Nature will compel thee" (18/59). Arjuna did not respond even to this scolding. So Lord Kṛṣṇa had to say, "If you don't want to take refuge in Me, seek refuge in the Lord Who dwells in the hearts of all beings."

In fact Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Lord Who dwells in the heart of all beings are one and the same.

Link:–In the preceding verse Lord kṛṣṇa ordered Arjuna to take refuge in God Who dwells in the hearts of all beings. But Arjuna did not speak. So Lord Kṛṣṇa in order to warn him asks him to do as he wishes.

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया ।
विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥ ६३ ॥

iti te jñānamākhyātaṁ guhyādguhyataraṁ mayā
vimṛśyaitadaśeṣeṇa yathecchasi tathā kuru

Thus has this wisdom more secret than all secrets, been declared to thee by Me. Having reflected over it fully, do as thou wishest. 63

Comment:

'Iti te jñānamākhyātaṁ guhyādguhyataraṁ mayā' —The term 'Iti' (Thus) stands for refuge in the omnipresent Lord Who dwells in the hearts of all beings . This teaching is more secret* while the teaching of Karmayoga (Discipline of Action) is secret.

'Vimṛśyaitadaśeṣeṇa' —The Lord

* Wise men endowed with equanimity, renouncing the fruit of actions attain the blissful supreme state (2/51); the perfection which is attained by Jñānayoga is also attained by Karmayoga (4/38); a Karmayogī attains to the Absolute in no time (5/6); abandoning attachment to the fruit of actions, the Kramayogī attains peace (5/12). Thus Karmayoga (Discipline of Action) has been declared to be an independent means to realize God. So it is said to be secret.

By renouncing affinity with the world, seeking refuge in God Who is formless, is more significant than Karmayoga. Therefore it is called more secret.

I am imparting to you the ancient Yoga which I taught to sun-god (4/3); all this world is pervaded by Me (9/4); I surpass the perishable and am higher even than the imperishable, I am known as the Supreme Person (15/18). In these statements the Lord has shown His lordliness. So this is called the greatest or sovereign secret.

Abandoning all duties seek refuge in Me alone. I shall release thee from all sins; grieve not (18/66). This is called His supreme word, the most secret of all.

The Supreme secret Yoga is that which includes all the disciplines of Action, of Knowledge and Devotion (18/68, 75).

having told Arjuna the more secret knowledge in the form of surrender tells him that the topic of refuge is full of devotion. So Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to reflect over this topic of surrender or refuge or devotion fully. The term 'Etat' denotes the topic of refuge described in the fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh verses of this chapter while the term 'Aśeṣeṇa' denotes the topic of devotion described in whole of the Gītā*. Through the expression 'Vimṛśyaitadaśeṣeṇa' the Lord expresses His special grace in a secret way. The Lord wants that he should not have a disinclination for Him. If he ponders over His gospel he will realize the reality that none is superior to, more loving and more merciful than Him.

'Yathecchasi tathā kuru' —Lord Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to reflect fully over His teaching and then do as he wishes. It shows Lord Kṛṣṇa's manifest intimacy, grace and benevolence for him.

In verse (7/2) when the Lord declares that He will unfold to him in its entirety this knowledge with Realization and in (9/1) when He declares that He will declare the knowledge with Realization and in (10/1) when He asks him to listen to His supreme word, there is His common grace for Arjuna. But in (18/58) when He says to Arjuna that if he does not act according to His advice, he will perish, there is His special grace.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to do as he wishes, Arjuna is very much perturbed by thinking that the Lord is abandoning him. A devotee can tolerate his chiding but can't bear separation from the Lord. Arjuna was not so much perturbed when he was admonished by the Lord with the words that he would perish if he did not act according to His advice as he is now. He thinks that he committed a blunder that in spite of the Lord's loving advice, warning and the topic of taking refuge in the all-pervading God, he didn't respond favourably. So at last the Lord had to say "Do as thou wishest". By thinking so Arjuna becomes too wretched to express himself to the Lord. He now feels very much sad and dejected. So the Lord utters the most secret words of his own accord in the next verse.

Link:–In the preceding verse Lord Kṛṣṇa ordered Arjuna to reflect over His teaching fully and receive its gist. But Arjuna could not grasp the gist of His teaching because the purport of the teaching is not known as much to the listener as to the speaker. Secondly Lord Kṛṣṇa asked him to do as he wished. Hearing these words he got despondent. So Lord Kṛṣṇa telling him the quintessence of His teaching consoles him.

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* In the Gīta the topic of devotion has been described in the following verses — Among all the Yogīs, he who full of faith worships Me, is deeemed by Me to be the most devout (6/47); Those who take refuge in Me alone cross this Māyā (divine potency) (7/14); Such a great soul, who realizes that all this is God, is very rare (7/19); I am easily attainable to the Yogī who constantly thinks of Me with undivided mind (8/14); The Supreme Person is attainable only by exclusive devotion (8/22); Great souls possessing a divine nature worship Me constantly with undivided mind (9/13); The devotees of firm resolve, constantly chanting My names and glories, and bowing to Me, worship Me with single minded devotion (9/14);. I secure what is not already possessed and personally attend to the needs of those devotees who worship Me alone (9/22); Whosoever offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, that offering of love, I accept (9/26); Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give, whatever you do as penance, offer it all to Me (9/27); You will be freed from the bonds of action yielding good and evil fruits (9/28); fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, adore Me, bow down to Me (9/34); I dispel the darkness born of ignorance of My devotees so that they may attain Me (10/9-11); Through single minded devotion I can be seen and known and even entered into (11/54); The devotee who regards Me as his supreme goal reaches Me (11/55); Those who worship Me with supreme faith are the best in Yoga (12/2); I rescue those from the ocean of birth and death who worship Me with single minded devotion (12/6-7); by fixing your mind on Me and your intellect in Me alone, thereafter you will abide in Me (12/8); He who worship Me with exclusive devotion transcending the three modes becomes eligible for attaining Brahma (14/26); He, who worships Me with his whole being, is the knower of all (15/19) and so on.

सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः।
इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम्॥ ६४॥

sarvaguhyatamaṁ bhūyaḥ śṛṇu me paramaṁ vacaḥ
iṣṭo'si me dṛḍhamiti tato vakṣyāmi te hitam

Listen again to My supreme word, the most secret of all. Well beloved art thou of Me, therefore I shall tell thee what is good for thee. 64

Comment:

'Sarvaguhyatamaṁ bhūyaḥ śṛṇu me paramaṁ vacaḥ'—In the sixty-third verse the Lord told Arjuna the wisdom which was more secret (refuge in God) than the teaching of Karmayoga which was secret, while in (9/1) and (15/20) He imparted the most secret teaching (Guhyatamam—(His glory). But He did not tell, His supreme word (Sarvaguhyatamam) before. It is only here that He unfolds it to him.

He also warns Arjuna that this supreme word should not be disclosed to a man who is without austerity nor to one without devotion because it is the most secret of all the other secrets disclosed so far* (This is—Abandoning all duties, seek refuge in Me alone). This is the supreme secret teaching of the Gītā.

In the seventh verse of the second chapter Arjuna said, "Being tainted by the vice of faint-heartedness and my mind puzzled with regard to duty, I ask you. Tell me that which is decidedly good; I am your disciple. Pray instruct me, who have sought refuge in you." So Lord Kṛṣṇa here (in 18/66) says, "Abandoning all duties, seek refuge in Me alone. I shall release you from all sins; grieve not." This is Lord Kṛṣṇa's supreme word, the supreme secret of all the secrets.

By the expression 'Bhūyaḥ śṛṇu' (Listen again) Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say that He also imparted His teaching to him even before but at that time he failed to take special note of it. So He was telling the mystery of all mysteries again and expected that Arjuna would listen to it with rapt attention.

This gospel was imparted to him in (18/57) when the Lord said to him, "Have your mind constantly fixed on Me," and also in (18/58) when He declared, "Fixing your mind on Me, you will by My grace overcome all obstacles." But He did not use the expression 'Sarvaguhyatamam' (the supreme secret of all) before and Arjuna did not take any special note of it. So in order to divert Arjuna's attention to His supreme word, the supreme secret of all, Lord Kṛṣṇa uses this expression.

'Iṣṭo'si me dṛḍhamiti' —The Lord in the preceding verse admonishing him asked him to do as he wished. What can be a more severe punishment to an obedient devotee than these words of indifference? Arjuna having heard these words is

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* At the begining of the tenth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa said, "Hear once again My supreme word, O mighty-armed," while here He says, "Hear again My supreme word, the most secret of all." The difference is that there He used the words 'mighty-armed' while here 'the most secret of all.' There in (10/9) He used 'Maccittāḥ' (with their minds wholly fixed on Me), while here He uses in (18/57-58) the term 'Maccittaḥ' (with thy mind fixed on Me). The difference is that the former teaching is for the general people while the latter is specially for Arjuna as He uses the second person for him. There He declared that by His grace his ignorance would be dispelled while here He says that by His grace he will overcome all obstacles.

There in (10/1) He said, "I shall speak to you, who are so loving, out of solicitude for your welfare" while here He says, "I shall tell you what is good for you." There in 9/34 having said 'Fix your mind on Me' He said "O mighty-armed, hear once again My supreme word' (10/1), while here having said, "Hear again, My supreme word, the most secret of all" (18/64) He said, "Fix your mind on Me" (18/65).

As the expression 'Sarvaguhyatamam' (the supreme secret of all) has been used once, so has the sentence, "Abandoning all duties, take refuge in Me alone" (18/66).

perturbed by thinking that the Lord is abandoning him. In order to remove his fear He consoles him by saying, "Well beloved art thou of Me". Had Arjuna not been perturbed, there would not have been any need for Lord Kṛṣṇa to tell Arjuna that he was well beloved of Him.

Secondly Lord Kṛṣṇa uses the term 'Iṣṭa' (Favourite) because He considers His devout devotee His favourite deity. As a devotee with exclusive devotion regards the Lord as his favourite deity, so does the Lord do because He declares, "Howsoever men approach Me, even so do I seek them" (Gītā 4/11). In the Bhāgavata Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Uddhava, "O Uddhava, neither Brahmājī nor Lord Śaṅkara, nor Balarāmajī, nor Lakṣmījī who resides in My body nor My soul is so much loving to Me as the devout devotees like you."

By using the term 'Dṛḍham' the Lord means to say to Arjuna that he should be free from fear because he has accepted "I have sought refuge in You" (Gītā 2/7). The reason is that anyone who having sought refuge in Him says from his heart even once, 'I am only yours,' the Lord grants him security from all beings; such is His vow.

'Tato vakṣyāmi te hitam'— Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that he is His loving friend and therefore He will impart to him the teaching of taking refuge in Him which is the supreme secret of all. Secondly He will unfold it to him in order to do good to him without hoping any reward from him. It proves that a man's welfare or good lies in taking refuge in the Lord without depending on any one else.

The man (soul) is a fragment of God and so he should depend only on God, he should take refuge in Him only. If he depends on things, incidents, circumstances and persons etc., he will have to be sad and worried because all of them are perishable. As coal shines in the fire, but it becomes black when it is separated from fire, similarly if a man (soul) (self) has an inclination for the Lord and takes refuge in Him, he shines by becoming one with the Lord and may lead the world to salvation. But if he has a disinclination for the Lord, he has to suffer and follow the cycle of birth and death.

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥ ६५ ॥

manmanā bhava madbhakto madyājī mām namaskuru
māmevaiṣyasi satyam te pratijāne priyo'si me

Fix thy mind on Me; be devoted to Me; worship Me; prostrate thyself before Me; so shalt thou come to Me. I promise thee truly for thou art dear to Me. 65

Comment:

'Madbhaktaḥ'— A striver first of all should change his egoistic notion ('I'ness) by accepting that he belongs to the Lord. Without changing the ego he cannot make speedy progress. By doing so his progress in the spiritual path becomes easy and natural.

A disciple accepts a person his preceptor and then he becomes of his preceptor. A girl after her marriage accepts her husband as hers by changing her egoism and so she becomes attached to the family of her husband. Similarly a striver should accept that he is of the Lord only and only the Lord is his; he does not belong to the world and the world does not belong to him (When egoism changes, mineness also naturally changes).

'Manmanā bhava'— When a striver assumes that he belongs to the Lord and the Lord belongs to him, He becomes

loving to him and then his mind is naturally fixed on Him. In that case he naturally thinks of His name, glory and sport etc. Moreover he recites His name and meditates on Him very promptly and affectionately.

'Madyājī'— When a striver becomes of the Lord by changing his egoism, he serves Him by performing actions. The more his intimacy with the Lord develops, the more devoted he becomes in rendering service to Him. That service changes into adoration. So whatever worldly, household or bodily work he does becomes worship to the Lord. He has a firm conviction that he has to do nothing except worship to God.

'Mām namaskuru'— A striver by prostrating himself before the Lord should totally surrender himself to Him. In that case he should be extremely happy both in favourable and unfavourable circumstances by regarding it as gracious divine dispensation.

He holds that whatever God does is for his welfare whether he understands it or not because He is the disinterested friend of all beings. So he should think that the Lord by creating the desirable or undesirable circumstances is absolving him of his good deeds and sins and making him pure so that he may be attracted towards His feet. This is prostration before the Lord.

'Māmevaiṣyasi satyam te pratijāne priyo'si me' —Lord Kṛṣṇa promises truly to Arjuna that by fixing his mind on Him, by being devoted to Him, by worshipping Him, by prostrating himself before Him, he will come to Him* because he is dear to Him.

By the term 'Priyo'si' (Thou art dear) the Lord means to say that every being (soul) is very dear to Him because it is His fragment. He may send it to eighty-four lac forms of lives or even to hell but His aim is to purify it. This gracious dispensation of the Lord towards all beings reveals His loving nature. So Arjuna here represents all beings.

Every being (soul) is very loving to God. A human being having a disinclination for God assumes the worldly perishable things such as wealth, property, family, body, senses, mind, intellect and life-breath etc., as his own while the world has never accepted him as its own. All the worldly things are kaleidoscopic and perishable while he himself is unchanging and imperishable. But he commits an error by assuming his affinity with the kaleidoscopic world as eternal. This is the reason that this affinity with a person persists even when the person is dead. This assumed affinity is the cause of his fall. He is free whether he accepts this affinity or he does not accept it. So by renouncing this assumed affinity, he should realize his real and eternal affinity with God and should take refuge in Him.

Link:–Having consoled Arjuna in the preceding two verses the Lord in the next verse unfolds the supreme secret of all secrets.

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ ६६ ॥

sarvadharmānparityajya māmekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ

Abandoning dependence all duties, take refuge in Me alone. I shall liberate you from all sins; grieve not. 66

Comment:

'Sarvadharmānparityajya māmekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja'— Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna to take refuge in

* If a devotee either fixes his mind on Him or is devoted to Him or sacrifices to Him or bows to Him — by practising one, the remaining three are naturally practised.

Him by abandoning all duties i.e., what to do and what not to do. Refuge in the Lord is the quintessence of the gospel of the Lord. When a devotee takes refuge in Him, like a chaste wife, he has to do nothing for himself. As a chaste wife performs every action in order to please her husband without thinking of her own taste and inclination, and her husband's Gotra (sub caste) becomes hers, similarly a devotee who takes refuge in Him, surrenders everything to Him and becomes free from worry, fear, sorrow and doubt.

Here the term 'Dharma' stands for duty. The reason is that from the forty-first verse to the forty-fourth verse the terms 'Svabhāvaja Karma' (duties born of their natures) have been used. In the first half of the forty-seventh verse the term 'Svadharma' (one's own duty) has been used. Again in the second half of the forty-seventh verse and also in the forty-eighth verse the term. 'Karma' (Duty) has been used. It means that in this context at the beginning and the end the term 'Karma' has been used while in the middle the term 'Svadharma' (one's own duty) has been used. So the term 'Dharma' stands for duty.

Now a question rises whether one's duties should be practically abandoned. The answer is that it is not proper to abandon one's duties because in response to the order of Lord Kṛṣṇa Arjuna says, "I shall act according to Your word" (18/73). Then he carried out His order and waged the war. Moreover in the sixth verse of this chapter the Lord declared, "The acts of sacrifice, gift and penance and all other duties must be performed."*

After studying the Gītā it becomes clear that a man should not renounce his duties under any circumstances. Arjuna thought that it was better to live on alms than to perform his duty of slaying the honoured teachers in the war (2/5); but Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorted him to wage such a righteous war by saying that there is nothing more welcome for a man of the warrior class than a righteous war (2/31-38). It proves that one should not renounce one's duty which has been prescribed for him according to his caste, stage of life and circumstances etc.

Then why does Lord Kṛṣṇa say to Arjuna to abandon all duties? The Lord means to say that all duties must be offered to Him. By doing so a striver will not depend on duties but will depend on God. The Lord declares that those who depend on duties (actions) are subject to birth and death (Gītā 9/21). By depending only on Him, one need not decide what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. It practically happened in Arjuna's life.

Arjuna was fighting against Karṇa. The wheel of Karṇa's chariot got stuck in the mud. Karṇa was trying to push it out. So he said to Arjuna, "You are in the chariot but I am not in a chariot. You possess knowledge of the scriptures and you are well versed in the science of arms like Sahasrārjuna. You also know the science

* In the third chapter there is description that a man should not abstain from actions. "Not by non-performance of actions does a man reach actionlessness; nor by mere renunciation does he attain to perfection (3/4)." "None can remain inactive even for a moment" (3/5). He who restraining the organs of action, thinks of the sense-objects, is called a hypocrite" (3/6). "He who controlling the senses by the mind engages himself in action, he excels" (3/7). "Perform your allotted duty because desisting from action, you can't even maintain your body" (3/8). "Perform action for the sake of sacrifice alone" (3/9). "Having created mankind at the beginning of creation, the creator, Brahmā said to them, "By this shall ye propagate; let this be the milch-cow to provide you necessities for sacrifice" (3/10). "You and the gods fostering each other shall attain to the supreme good" (3/11). "He who enjoys the gifts without giving to the gods in return is a thief" (3/12). "Those who partake of what is left after sacrifice, are absolved of all sins while those who cook for the sake of nourishing their body alone, eat only sin" (3/13). "He who does not perform his duties, lives in vain" (3/16). "A man by performing actions without attachment attains the supreme" (3/19). "It is through action alone that Janaka and other wise men reached perfection. You should perform action with a view to the maintenance of the world" (3/20). The Lord says, "If I don't perform actions, I should be the creator of confusion of castes and destruction of these people" (3/23-24). "The wise should act without attachment as the unwise act with attachment" (3/25). "Let no wise man unsettle the mind of ignorant people attached to action, but should get them to perform all their duties, duly performing them himself" (3/26). Thus the Lord has laid great emphasis on the performance of one's duty in the third chapter.

of ethics. So it is not proper on your part to shoot arrows on me." So Arjuna did not shoot arrows. Then Lord Kṛṣṇa said to Karṇa, "It is righteous rather than sinful to kill such a desperado as you*. Six chariot-warriors including you have murdered Abhimanyu who was alone. Therefore there is no use for you to support righteousness. It is fortunate that you are reminded of righteousness at this moment. But he who himself does not translate righteousness into practice has no right to preach it to others." Having uttered these words Lord Kṛṣṇa ordered Arjuna to shoot arrows. By obeying Him Arjuna began to shoot arrows.

If Arjuna had taken the decision about his duty by applying his intellect, he would have committed an error of judgment. But he left it on the Lord and it was He Who took the right decision.

Arjuna was in a dilemma whether to fight or not to fight (2/6). He thought that if he fought, there would be the destruction of his family and sin would take hold of the entire family. The women of the family would become corrupt and there would ensue an intermixture of castes. Thus the agelong caste-traditions and family customs would get extinct (1/39-44). On the other hand there was nothing more welcome for a man of the warrior class than a righteous war. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to entrust Him with the task of taking the decision about his duty without being confused about it.

'Māmekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja' — Here the term 'Ekam' (Alone) stands for exclusive or undivided. In (3/2) and (5/1) also Arjuna by using the term 'Ekam' (One) asked Lord Kṛṣṇa to tell him definitely the one discipline by which he might attain bliss. So Lord Kṛṣṇa in response to his question says that exclusive (undivided) refuge is the best discipline to attain bliss or God-Realization.

In the Gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa has laid, time and again great emphasis on the merit of exclusive devotion. 'Those who take refuge in Me alone get over this divine delusion of Mine' (7/14); 'I am easily attainable to the Yogī (Ascetic) who always and constantly thinks of Me with undivided mind' (8/14)†. 'For those men who worship Me alone, I provide what is not possessed and preserve what they already possess' (9/22); 'Through single minded devotion I can be seen and known and even entered into' (11/54); 'I speedily deliver from the ocean of birth and death those who meditate on Me with single minded devotion' (12/6-7); 'Those who worship Me with exclusive devotion transcend the three modes of nature' (14/26). Thus having described the merit of exclusive devotion the Lord gives the quintessence of the entire gospel of the Gītā by declaring, "Take refuge in Me alone." It means that the Lord is the means as well as the end.

The sentence 'Māmekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja' means that a striver should take refuge in Him not by mind and intellect but by the self. When he takes refuge by the self, his mind, body, senses and intellect etc., automatically take refuge in Him.

'Ahaṁ tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ' —It may be thought that Lord Kṛṣṇa allured Arjuna to liberate him from the sin as he was afraid of in the first chapter. But it is not reasonable because as soon as a man seeks refuge in the Lord, his sins of millions of birth perish. If the Lord wanted to allure him that he would liberate him from all sins, He would do it earlier before he took refuge in Him.

When the Lord declares that He will liberate him from all sins, He means to say that having taken refuge in Him if he finds that he has not got rid of evil propensities

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* A desperado who is bent upon doing harm to any one should be killed. Such a killer does not incur any sin (evil).
† 'Undivided mind' stands for exclusive devotion or exclusive dependence.

and has not developed devotion to God and has not beheld Him, he need not worry. It is the Lord's responsibility to free him from all defects. If he himself wants to shoulder the responsibility, it shows that he has not yet taken refuge. When he has taken refuge in Him, he should be free from worry, sadness, fear and doubt. If these evils crop up in him, they will prove to be obstacles in refuge and the responsibility (burden) will remain his. This responsibility is a blot on refuge. After he has taken refuge in Him, his defects are the Lord's defects and his whole responsibility goes to the Lord.

When Vibhīṣaṇa took refuge in Lord Rāma, Rāma shouldered his full responsibility. Once in a village named Vipraghoṣa, a Brāhmaṇa (a member of the priest class) was killed by him. First he was badly beaten and then he was chained and imprisoned. When Lord Rāma came to know this incident, He flew to Vipraghoṣa by the airy car named Puṣpaka. The villagers extended a cordial welcome to Lord Rāma and said to Him that Vibhīṣaṇa had murdered a Brāhmaṇa and so they gave him a severe beating, but he was not killed. Lord Rāma said, "Oh, people of the priest class, I have granted him an age of a Kalpa (consisting of 4,32,00,00,000 years of mortals) and also kingdom. How can he be killed? Moreover he is My devotee. The responsibility of the crime of a servant goes to his master and the master deserves punishment. Therefore instead of Vibhīṣaṇa give punishment to Me." The Brāhmaṇas having perceived the affection of Lord Rāma for a refugee, were wonder-struck and all of them sought refuge in Him.

It means that 'I am the Lord's and the Lord is mine' this is the quintessence of all spiritual disciplines. Nothing such as eligibility, capability, qualification and virtue is equal to the sense of mine with the Lord. A weeping child awakens all the members of the family at mid-night and they try their best to please the child. Why? Because the child is theirs. So a devotee who has taken refuge in the Lord should hold that he is the Lord's and only the Lord is his.

'Mā śucaḥ' means —

(1) Having taken refuge in Me if you grieve, it is out of your pride and it is a crime and it is a blot on refuge.

When you have taken refuge in Me, you should totally depend on Me. If you don't totally depend on Me, it is a crime. If you worry after thinking of your defects, it means that you have pride of your own because you think to get rid of them by your power*. If you have defects you should be sad but not worried, like the child who starts weeping without worrying when it sees a dog coming towards it. But if you worry, the people will laugh at you and at Me. They will think that a devotee of God is worried and the Lord does not rid him of it. It means that you have no faith in Me. It is a blot on Me and My refuge. Therefore abandon your worry.

(2) Don't worry even if your thoughts and feelings have not been purified. It is My responsibility to puirify them.

(3) In the seventh verse of the second chapter Arjuna says to Lord Kṛṣṇa that he has taken refuge in Him. But in the eighth verse he says that even on obtaining undisputed sovereignty and an affluent kingdom on the earth and lordship over the gods, he does not see any means that can drive away the grief which is drying up his senses. At this the Lord seems to say to Arjuna that he is right because a man can't be free from grief so long as he is attached to the perishable persons and objects. But it is a blunder on his part if he grieves having taken refuge in Him.

(4) The devotee having taken refuge in the Lord should not worry what will happen to him here or hereafter. In this connection a devotee said, "O slayer of Narakāsura, You may provide me residence either in heaven

* In the assembly of the Kauravas when an effort is made to strip the Sārī from Draupadī's body, she holds the Sārī with her hands and teeth. But then finding herself helpless she invokes Lord Krsna and totally depends upon Him. Then Duḥśāsana gets totally tired but is unable to strip the Sārī from her body because the Sārī becomes too long to be stripped.

or hell or on the earth and behave towards me in anyway according to Your sweet will. But I have the only demand that I may go on thinking of Your most beautiful feet which excels even the beauty of the lotus of the autumn season. Even at the time of death."

An Important Fact Pertaining to Refuge

When a devotee holds that he is the Lord's and the Lord is his, his defects such as worry, fear, sadness and doubt are rooted out. The reason is that all the defects are based on his dependence on the world including the body and on his disinclination for the Lord. As soon as his affinity with the Lord gets firm footing, all his defects perish.

The criteria of his firm affinity with the Lord are the following:—

(1) Fearlessness:— The devotee who takes refuge in the Lord becomes free from external fear as that of poisonous snakes and scorpions and wild beasts such as lion etc., and also from internal fear of evil propensities etc. A striver should not have such a fear that his tendencies may become of evil nature because by God's grace he becomes saturated with divine mercy. So there is no question of any such fear for him. He couldn't purify his evil thoughts as he regarded them as 'mine'. To regard them as one's own is impurity. He also becomes totally free from the greatest fear of death from which even the scholars can't escape. He perceives the Lord's grace everywhere.

Now a doubt may arise that when a devotee worships God with exclusive devotion, it means that he regards himself as different from God and so he should be afraid of Him. But this doubt is baseless, because the devotee becomes so much intimate with the Lord, that no question arises of his being afraid of Him. He being the Lord's fragment having taken refuge in Him, becomes fearless for ever like the child who becomes fearless on the lap of his mother, He is different from Prakṛti (Nature), not from Him. The Lord and he (self) are sentient, eternal, imperishable and unchanging while Prakṛti is insentient, transient, perishable and kaleidoscopic. So he can be afraid of nature, not of the Lord. Actually a devotee (self) has his identity with God but he forgets it. But when he takes refuge in the Lord, he realizes this fact.

(2) Freedom from sadness (sorrow): —A person grieves over what has passed. To grieve over the past is a blunder. A devotee believes that whatever is alotted, can't be blotted, and every action or incident or circumstance destined by the Lord is for his good. By thinking so he remains free from sadness.

(3) Freedom from worry: — When a devotee takes refuge in God, he is not at all worried about the necessities of life here or what will happen to him in future. If he surrenders himself to God, how can worry remain ? Worry is contrary to surrender. If worry is there, actually there is no surrender. The Lord declares, "I'll release you from all sins." What efforts does he need then ? He is least worried whether his mind and intellect are purified or not. If sometimes evil propensities get hold of his mind, he may invoke the Lord to save him but he does not at all worry or grieve. He becomes a yesman to His will because the Lord shoulders his full responsibility. If sometimes he feels that the body, senses, mind, life-breath and intellect are his, it is his guilt. He prays to God to deliver him from this guilt and becomes free from worry.

(4) Freedom from doubt: —He does not doubt whether he is of the Lord or not and whether the Lord has accepted him or not. He believes that he has been of the Lord since time immemorial, and he will remain His. He holds that it was an error on his part that he had regarded himself as separate from the Lord. But it is impossible because the Lord declares "He (the self) is a fragment of My own self" (Gītā 15/7). Thus he has a belief that he is of the Lord and the Lord is his without doubt.

(5) Not to put to a test: — The devotee who takes refuge in the Lord does not put his refuge to a test that he should possess such virtues; and if he does not passess them, it means that he has not taken refuge. He has a firm belief that he has taken refuge in the Lord, and so he is surprised when he perceives that the marks

of the devotee, who is dear to the Lord (Gītā 12/13-19), are missing from him*. By thinking so he develops the marks of an enlightened devotee without making any effort.

(6) Not to have a contrary resolution: —Such a devotee has no contrary resolution that he is not of the Lord. He has a firm belief that his relationship with the Lord is permanent and eternal and he is only His. He was not conscious of it. This was his blunder. This relationship is axiomatic. Now this blunder is off. So how can he have the contrary belief ?

One who heartily accepts refuge in God, he becomes free from evils such as fear, grief and worry etc., and his belief in surrender is intensified automatically.

A girl after her marriage regards her husband's house as her own. This relationship is so much strenghthened that when she becomes grandmother or great grandmother, she almost forgets that she belonged to any other family. When the wife of her grandson or great grandson misbehaves towards any other member of the family, she scolds her by uttering the words that the girl born in another family has spoiled the environment of her family. It means that when even this assumed affinity is so much strengthened, why should the real affinity of a man with the Lord not be strengthened? His assumed affinity with the world is the only obstacle to it.

If such a devotee lacks anything in devotion or conduct; if he has contrary tendencies and his conduct is not according to the Lord's will, there will be burning sensation in his heart. God by His grace will purge him of all sins and makeup his deficiency; he need not make any amend in it.

The Lord perceives the feeling of 'mineness' of the devotee for Him, He can't behold his defects because he is His fragment permanently while the defects are temporary as they appear and disappear. When a child stained with mud comes to its mother and seeks her lap the mother is ever prepared to put it on her lap without thinking whether it is dirty or clean. All this happens due to the feeling of mineness. The child does not mind whether it is dirty or not or whether the mother cleans it or not. Instead of seeing the mud, it only beholds its mother. Draupadī had the evil propensities of enmity and anger for Duḥśāsana that she decided that she would not dress her hair unless she stained it with Duḥśāsana's blood. But as soon as she called Lord Kṛṣṇa, He appeared before her because of her intimacy with Him.

In the feeling of 'mineness' he may consider (i) 'The Lord is mine' (ii) 'I am the Lord's'. In the former a devotee may lay a claim over the Lord and thus may wish that his desires should be fulfilled by Him. But in the latter he surrenders himself to the Lord and thus becomes a yesman to His sweet will. A striver should never lay claim on God. He should rather accept God's lordship over him. If the Lord does something according to his will, he feels hesitation that the Lord has to satisfy his will. If he feels satisfied and happy, it means that there is some deficiency in surrender.

Such a devout devotee has nothing to do for him. He has already offered himself and his possessions to the Lord which were really the Lord's. Whatever he does, does only God's work. In such a situation even in the most adverse and horrible circumstances he

* In order to make the point clear there is an anecdote. At the death of the mother, the two elder brothers asked the younger brother to take the ash of the dead mother's body and cast it into the Ganges. The distance of the Ganges from their house was six hundred miles. He got tired after covering a distance of three hundred miles. So he threw the ash and filled the metal mug with rainy water in order to show that he had gone to the Ganges and brought its holy water. When he came back home, his elder brothers knew the fact because he had come back earlier than he should have returned. When they asked him, he told a lie.

Next day one of the elder brothers said to the younger brother that he had a dream in which the mother said to him that he had thrown the ash on the way, not into the Ganges. The younger brother replied if the mother instead of coming in this direction having covered a distance of three hundred miles, had gone in the opposite direction, she would have reached the Ganges.

This anecdote shows that a devotee should not have a contrary resolution like the younger brother who said why the mother came in the opposite direction and if she had gone the other side, she would have reached the Ganges.

A devotee should think why he lacks the marks of an enlightened devotee when he has taken refuge in the Lord. By thinking so he will inculcate those virtues (marks) and become enlightened. But if he has the contrary resolution, he will be cheated by his own self.

remains enamoured of Divine grace in abundance. So a striver who takes rufuge in the Lord ever remains pleased with His will without having any desire of his own even in the most undesirable circumstances like Kākabhuśuṇḍi.

Kākabhuśuṇḍi narrated the life history of his previous birth that he was a Brāhmaṇa (a member of the priest class). The sage named Lomaśa called down a curse upon him. So he took birth as a crow. But he was not sad because he thought that it happened by the Lord's will (Mānasa 7/113/1). Sage Lomaśa saw that he was still happy. So he called him and preached him how to meditate on Lord Rāma because he was the loving devotee to God. Moreover he narrated to him the life history of Lord Rāma and gave him blessings. "You will become loving to Lord Rāma. You will possess all virtues. You will be able to transform yourself to any form, you like. Your home with its surroundings will remain totally untouched by the deluding potency of the Lord (Māyā) and so on." Just then there was an oracle, "O sage, whatever you have said will prove true, this crow is a devotee of Mine by thought, word and deed." So in the Rāmacaritamānasa it is said that the sage's curse proved to be a blessing for it because of adoration and such a blessing is scarcely granted even to an ascetic.

Here adoration stands for being pleased in the Lord's sweet will even in the most unfavourable and undesirable circumstances. The more unfavourable the circumstances are, the more pleased a devout devotee becomes because love enhances every moment.

As a rule if a thing is ours, it is loving to us. All the beings are the Lord's and so they are very loving to Him (Mānasa 7/86/2), and the Lord is also naturally loving to them. But they have a disinclination for Him by an error regarding the kaleidoscopic world and the bodies as their own. Still the Lord does not renounce them as they are fragment of the Lord. He ever loves them. So for the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of the wicked and for the firm establishment of righteousness, He is born in every age (Gītā 4/8). What is the Lord's own purpose which is served through these three objectives of His incarnation ? It is because of His love for beings that he comes into being for the welfare of beings. His incarnation proves His sense of mineness, mercy, lovingness, benevolence and disinterested and impartial magnanimity. It is because of the disinclination of beings for Him that they have to suffer and follow the cycle of birth and death. So the Lord asks them to fix their mind on Him, to be devoted to Him, to worship Him and to prostrate themselves before Him so that they may have an inclination for Him by having a disinclination for the perishable world.

Whatever the Lord designs, is only for the welfare of all beings. If beings pay attention to this fact, nothing remains to be done by them. The Lord has a burning desire to do good to beings. So He discloses the secret of all secrets, "Abandoning all duties, take refuge in Me alone."The reason is that He regards Himself as the disinterested friend of all beings (5/29). He has given them freedom to attain Him by anyone of the Disciplines of Action or Knowledge or Devotion and get rid of worldly sufferings for ever.

In fact a being attains salvation only by God's grace. So He and the liberated souls who know Him in reality have revealed the different disciplines—of Action, Knowledge, Devotion, Aṣṭāṅgayoga, Layayoga, Haṭhayoga and Rājayoga etc., because both of them think of the good of all beings without any selfish motive (Mānasa 7/47/3). The Lord by His grace by making a striver just an instrument enables him to attain perfection.

The devout devotee who takes refuge in the Lord does not worry that he has not yet had a vision of the Lord, he has not developed true devotion to Him and his inclinations have not been purified and so on. If he worries, he is like the monkey's

young one who by holding its mother shoulders the responsibility itself. A devout devotee, like a kitten which totally depends upon its mother, depends on the Lord without worrying whether He appears before him or not, whether He bestows love upon him or not and whether he purifies his propensities or not. A kitten contracts its limbs and leaves itself to its mother when she carries it anywhere. Similarly a devotee withdrawing himself from the world beholds the Lord by meditating upon Him, reciting His name and performing such other spiritual activities. He remains fully satisfied and happy with whatever happens to him regarding it as the Lord's sweet will.

A devotee is like clay which leaves itself at the potter's will. The potter mixes water in it, kneads it, crushes it, pats it, puts it on his wheel, moulds it, makes pots such as pitcher, jar and plates etc. Similarly a devotee leaves himself at the Lord's will and becomes free from worry and fear etc. Then the Lord's grace showers on him incessantly. The more free he is from worry and fears, the more Divine grace is showered on him. The more he is worried and has the pride of his capability, the more impediment, he puts in Divine grace. The Lord's uncommon, unique, incessant and continuous grace is showered on the devout devotee who takes refuge in Him.

When a fisherman throws his net in order to catch fish, all the fish which come within the net are trapped. But the fish which comes near his feet is not trapped. Similarly the beings having been attached to the world get entangled and follow the cycle of birth and death. But those who take refuge in Him get over the deluding potency (Māyā) of the Lord (Gītā 7/14). There is an important difference between the attitudes of the fisherman and the Lord. The fisherman wants to trap the fish but the Lord wants beings to be liberated from illusion by taking refuge in Him. So He declares, "Take refuge in Me alone." A person gets entangled in illusion by being attached to the worldly pleasures.

As in a moving mill stand all the other grains are ground but the grains which are near the rivet are not ground, similarly in the grinding-stone of the world all the people are ground i.e., they suffer and follow the cycle of birth and death. But those who take refuge in Him escape suffering and the cycle of birth and death. But there is a difference between the grain and the devotees. The grains remain near the rivet without making any effort while the devotees themselves, by having a disinclination for the world, take refuge in His feet. It means that if a man (soul) even being a fragment of the Lord, accepts his affinity with the world and wants his desire to be fulfilled by it, he has to suffer by following the cycle of birth and death.

A man's affinity with the world is assumed while with the Lord is real. The affinity with the world makes him a slave to the world, while the affinity with the Lord makes him a Lord even to the Lord. If a person regards himself superior to others because of learning, riches power and even renunciation and dispassion, it means that he is a slave to them because in fact he is not superior but these possessions have made him superior. So there is superiority of these possessions rather than his own. He is inferior to them. But if a devotee takes refuge in the Lord and depends only on Him, the Lord makes him a jewel of His crown or consider him His Lord. But even then he has no superiority complex, no pride of his virtues. In that case the Lord's uniqueness descends on him and sometimes even their bodies, senses, mind and intellect bocome divine, their earthliness is completely gone. Such devotees with their bodies merge in God. Mīrābāī merged in His Body. Only a piece of her Sārī was left in the Lord's mouth. Similarly saint Tukā Rāma went to the Abode of Lord Viṣṇu with his body.

In the Discipline of Knowledge the body does not become divine because a Jñānī (wise man) by renouncing his affinity with the unreal becomes established in the divine

essence. But when a devotee develops an inclination for God, his body, senses, mind and life-breath etc., are also inclined towards the Lord. It means that those who behold only the divine essence everywhere, divinity descends on their bodies though they appear gross to the worldly people.

When a devotee takes refuge in the Lord, He with Goddess Lakṣmī showers on him so much of affection and grace that they are beyond description. When the Lord saturated with love comes along with His consort Lakṣmī on His vehicle Guruḍa to behold His devotee, the hymns of Sāma-veda are sung by its wings. But if a devotee instead of worshipping Lord Viṣṇu, the preserver, worships only Goddess Lakṣmī (the goddess of wealth) whose vehicle is an owl, he receives wealth and is intoxicated with pride and then falls. The reason is that he looks at Mother Lakṣmī with sinister eyes as he wants to enjoy himself with her help. Thus he is very mean. Moreover if a person has a desire only to receive wealth by adoring Her, he may not receive it. But if he adores the Lord, Goddess Lakṣmī also certainly appears with Her husband Lord Viṣṇu and blesses him with wealth.

In this connection there is an anecdote of Hanumān, the monkey-god. Once Lord Rāma, Goddess Sītā and devotee Hanumān were sitting under a tree in a garden. A creeper vine was creeping over the branches of the tree. It (she) looked very beautiful with its flowers and leaves. Lord Rāma said to Hanumān, "Look, how beautiful this creeper is ! It is enhancing the beauty of the garden and specially this tree over which it is creeping. Moreover it is because of it that beasts and birds seek shelter under this tree. How blessed it is ! Is it not so?"

Hearing her praise from the Lord, Goddess Sītā said, "Dear son Hanumān, the beauty of this creeper depends on the tree. Its base or support is the tree. Where can it creep without the tree? So the credit for its beauty and shelter goes only to the tree. O.K., Hanumān?

Hanumān said, "There is something more meritorious than these two."

What is that?" said Sītā.

Hanumān said, "Mother, how fine the shade of the tree and the creeper is! I relish the shade of the two". Similarly the Lord and His power of bliss enrich the glory of each other. Some devotees consider both of them supreme, some others declare only the Lord as supreme while others regard His power of bliss as supreme. But for such a devout devotee refuge in both of them is desirable.

Once a blind saint was going along the bank of the Yamunā with a stick in his hand. The river was flooded. Suddenly he fell into the Yamunā and also missed his stick. He remembered the Lord's declaration pertaining to refuge. So he left himself at the will of God and then he felt as if someone had put him on the bank and also provided him with a stick. Thus a devotee is ever happy with what God destines for him.

Once a goat got astray from its herd at dusk. It saw the foot print of a lion and sat near it by taking rufuge in it. When beasts such as jackals and wolves etc., came to devour it, it said that it had sought refuge in the foot of the lion. So being afraid of the lion all of them fled. Finally the lion came and asked why it was sitting there all alone. The goat said that it had taken refuge in the lion whose foot print was there. The lion saw that it was his foot print. So he assured it that it need not be afraid of anyone as he would help it.

At night when an elephant came to drink water, the lion asked him to put the goat on his back and feed it with green leaves. The elephant carried out his order and the goat ate green leaves and remained carefree.

Similarly when a man seeks refuge in God, he gets rid of all obstacles and becomes fearless like the fish which swims against the flow of the river while even an elephant can't move in that direction.

Affinity with the Lord out of love, desire,

fear and envy leads a man to salvation*. But those who have no affinity with him but remain indifferent are deprived of God-Realization. Those who take refuge in God are dear to Him and become of the 'Acyuta' (Infallible) Lord's caste and creed though they are of different sexes, castes, creeds, colours, calibres etc.† They become one with Lord 'Acyuta'. So their 'Gotra' (Sub caste) also becomes 'Acyuta.'

The Secret of Refuge

It is only the Lord Who really knows the secret of refuge in Him. I am trying to explain it according to my own understanding with the request that the reader without grasping the deep and abstract ideas should not take its contrary meaning. They should reflect upon it because it is something very vital and rare.

In the Gītā pertaining to refuge Lord Kṛṣṇa has pointed out two factors—

(i) 'Seek refuge in Me alone' (18/66).

(ii) 'The undeluded person knowing all worship Me with his whole being (heart)' (15/19); 'Seek refuge in Him alone with all your being' (18/62).

How to take refuge in Him? A devotee without paying any attention to His virtues, glories, names, abode, beauty and lordliness etc., and having no desire of his own, should surrender himself to Him. He should think that he is only the Lord's and only the Lord is his. But anyone should not take the contrary meaning. The contrary meaning is that he stops listening to the virtues and glories etc., of the Lord and does not go to His birth place etc.

A devotee holds that the Lord is his whether He possesses virtues such as grace, beauty, glory, influence etc., or not. If the Lord is more hard-hearted and merciless than anyone else in the entire universe, He is his‡. If a person respects a rich man or a powerful man or a man holding a high post, he in fact does not respect him but he respects his riches or power or post.

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* Not only one but so many people out of desire, envy, fear and love by concentrating their mind on God and being purged of the sins have realized God as a devotee realizes Him through devotion. The cowherdesses out of desire, Kaṁsa out of fear, the kings such as Śiśupāla and Dantavaktra out of envy, the members of the Yadu clan out of family relationship and you (Yudhiṣṭhira etc.) out of love and we (Nārada etc.) out of devotion have concentrated the minds on God (Śrīmadbhā. 7/1/29-30).

Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "O sinless Uddhava ! In all the ages by good company i.e., affinity with Me demons and devils, birds and beasts, celestial musicians and damsels, snakes, perfect souls, guards and demi-gods have attained Me. Among human beings persons of the trading and labour classes, women and even persons of the lowest class who are endowed with the mode of passion and ignorance, have attained My Supreme State. Vṛtra, Prahlāda, Vṛṣaparvā, Bāli, Bāṇa, Maya, Vibhīṣaṇa etc., of the demon class; Sugrīva, Hanumān, Jāmbavān. etc., of the monkey class; beasts and birds such as the Gajendra and Jaṭāyu, Tulādhāra of the trading class; Dharma, a hunter; Kubjā of the low caste; cowherdesses of Vṛja; wives of the people of priest class who performed sacrifices and other people because of the good company, have attained Me.

Those people neither studied the Vedas nor obeyed the great personalities as sanctioned by the scriptures, nor observed any fast nor performed any penance. But only by good company i.e., affinity with Me they attained Me.

† In Mý adoration there is no distinction between men and women, and between persons having different names and belonging to different stages of life; the only important factor is devotion to Me (Adhyātma. Araṇya 10/20).

What is the use of being born in the upper most caste (Brāhmaṇa)? What is the utility of the deep study of all the scriptures? It means that there is no utility. Who can be more blessed in the entire universe than the being whose heart is full of devotion to God ?

Was the hunter a man of good conduct? Was Dhruva aged? Did Gajendra (lord of elephants) possess any learning or art? Did Vidura belong to an upper caste? Was Ugrasena belonging to the Yadu clan, heroic? Was Kubjā beautiful? Was Sudāmā rich? No. Yet all of them realized God because devotion is the only virtue which is loving to God and He gets satisfied with devotion, not with virtuous conduct and learning etc.

‡ My most loving Śrī Kṛṣṇa whether ugly or handsome, without virtues or most virtuous, envious of me or most gracious to me, howsoever He treats me, He is my only resort.

Whether He delights me by embracing or crushes me under his feet while I cling on to his feet or breaks my heart without appearing before me, that Śrī Kṛṣṇa of the free will may treat me in anyway He likes, but He is the only Lord of my life (Śikṣāṣṭaka 8).

Similarly if a devotee adores the Lord because of His virtues, glories, beauty and lordliness etc., he in fact does not adore the Lord but he adores those qualities. So a striver instead of setting eyes on His qualities should behold him only.

The seven sages went to Goddess Pārvatī and described the vices of Lord Śiva and virtues of Lord Viṣṇu and requested her to renounce her affinity with Lord Śiva. In response to their proposal she said, "Even if Lord Śiva is a sea of vices and Lord Viṣṇu is a sea of virtues, but anyone who has set mind on someone, is only connected with him" (Mānasa 1/80).

The same sort of message was conveyed by the cowherdesses to Uddhava when he brought Lord Kṛṣṇa's message to them.

Those Who have an eye on the Lord's virtues and glories etc., can attain salvation and glory etc., but can't realize God. But a devout devotee who beholds Him only, can realize Him, bind Him and even sell Him. The Lord holds him in high esteem. Those who see His glory and influence etc., have regard for His glory and influence etc., and it shows that they have a desire to receive something. But if a devotee beholds only the Lord, it means that he has taken refuge in Him and he is only the Lord's.

Ogress named Pūtanā by applying poison to her teat put it into Lord Kṛṣṇa's mouth so that while drawing milk He might be poisoned. But the merciful Lord enabled her to attain salvation regarding her as his mother. Who can be more gracious than He*? He awards salvation to the ogress who wants to poison Him. What should He award to His mother who feeds Him with milk everyday? He gives himself to her, He submits to her. When His mother shows stick to Him, He starts to weep.

A devotee who has taken refuge in the Lord, does not think whether his body, senses and mind etc., are under his control or not. He does not think of his honour, praise, virtues and conduct etc. He does not think that his eyes should be filled with tears and throat be choked with delight when he chants the Lord's name and glories or listens to the divine discourses. He regards all these items as rubbish. The reason is that if he finds virtues and characteristics of enlightened devotees (Gītā 12/13-19) in him, he will feel proud of them. But if he finds that he lacks them, he will be dejected. So a devotee should not worry about them. But He should not take the contrary meaning that he may have enmity or bear malice or have possessive spirit. Divine propensities are naturally developed in the devotee who takes refuge in God. He looks neither at his own virtues nor at the virtues of saints and liberated souls that he should possess them.

People complain why a devotee falls ill, why he suffers, why he becomes poor and why he is insulted and dishonoured, why his son expired, why his riches were lost and so on. But this sort of complaint or thought is futile. Those, who put a devotee to such a test, don't know anything either about good company or devotion or refuge. But it does not mean that such a devotee is always poor or sick or is insulted or dishonoured or blamed. He is not the least concerned with health and sickness, praise and blame or honour and dishonour etc. He beholds the Lord only. He does not think even of the glory of the Lord that He is the creator, the preserver and the destroyer of the entire universe.

Some one asked a saint whether he was a devotee to the Lord Who creates the universe, or one Who preserves it or one Who destroys it. He replied, "This is nothing special about our Lord, this is a phase of His life and glory." A devout devotee should never look at His glory.

At Ṛṣikeśa on the bank of the Ganges a saint was holding a discourse in the summer season. A cold wave came to that side. A striver said, "What a cold wave!"

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* Oh! this sinful Pūtanā having applied the deadly poison to her teat wanted to feed Kṛṣṇa in order to kill Him while He awarded her salvation which should have been awarded to the nurse. Who can be more merciful than He in whom one may seek refuge (Śrīmadbhā. 2/3/23) ?

Another striver said, "How could you divert your attention to the cold wave from the divine discourse?" Therefore so long as a striver pays attention to these outwardly temptations etc., it means that he is not devoted to the Lord.

In this connection there is an anecdote. The anecdote is of a depraved woman. So her action is forbidden. But it teaches a moral. There was a depraved woman. She wanted to meet her lover. On the way there was a mosque where a learned Mohammedan was offering his prayer to God. She unknowingly put her foot on the limb of the learned Mohammedan and went away. When she was coming back, he was very angry with her and he scolded her by saying that she was very foolish as she did not see that he was offering his prayer to God. She replied that she was so much absorbed in her lust for that man that she could not see him. But how could he behold her when he was engrossed in offering his prayer to the Lord ? According to her there was no use of such sort of prayer and study of the Qorāna. He should have devoted himself heart and soul to the Lord otherwise he can't be called a devout devotee and it means that he has not taken refuge in Him.

When the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas had learnt archery, their preceptor gave them a test. An artificial bird was perched on the branch of a tree. Each of them was asked to hit the neck of the bird. But before shooting each was asked what he was beholding. Other persons said that they were beholding the branch, the bird, the wings and the beak etc. The same question was put to Arjuna. He answered that only the neck was visible to him. So he was ordered to shoot the arrow. Arjuna hit the neck of the bird with his shot because he had one aim to achieve. Thus a devotee should have the only aim of God-Realization. This is called unswerving devotion (Gītā 13/10) or exclusive devotion to Him.

Some one told saint Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsa, "Your Lord Rāma, Whom you worship, is partly divine as He possesses only twelve divine traits (Kalā) while Lord Kṛṣṇa is fully divine as He possesses all the sixteen divine traits." Having heard these words Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsa bowed to him and said "You have been very kind to me by explaining that Lord Rāma is an incarnation having twelve Kalās (divine traits). I worshipped Him regarding him as Daśaratha's loving baby son only." He did not pay attention to the fact that Lord Kṛṣṇa was a complete incarnation of God as He possessed all the sixteen Kalās (divine traits).

Several devotees worship Lord Rāma or Lord Kṛṣṇa regarding Him as a small boy, son of Daśaratha or Nanda. So they request saints to bless their favourite Deity, boy Rāma or Kṛṣṇa. The Lord likes such a devotee and such a blessing very much. It means that such devout devotees don't pay any attention to His glories.

If a person touches the dust of the courtyard where Kanhaiyā (Kṛṣṇa) played, this dust enables him to attain all the four kinds of salvation. But mother Yaśodā regarding it as rubbish threw it into the dustbin because she beheld Kṛṣṇa only her son without paying any attention to His glory and qualifications etc.

Saints have declared that if a person wants to have a vision of the Lord he should have nothing with him because the dependence on anything such as mind, intellect, learning, riches or kith and kin etc., are veils which are obstacles to His vision. As soon as this veil of dependence on the material world is removed, a devotee beholds the Lord.

Once a saint met a rustic peasant of Vṛja. The peasant said that he worked only for his loving Kṛṣṇa. The saint said that he had an exclusive devotion to him. The peasant said that he had the most exclusive devotion to Him. The saint said to him, "What is the most exclusive devotion?" The peasant said, "What is exclusive devotion?" The saint said that in exclusive devotion a devotee has undivided devotion to his favourite Deity without worshipping the Sun-god, Gaṇeśa, Durgā and Brahmā etc.

The rustic peasant said, "O Grandpa, I have the most exclusive devotion because I don't know any damn name besides my Kanhaiyā (Kṛṣṇa)." Thus a devout devotee does not meditate on what is the Absolute, what is soul, whether God is endowed with form and attributes or He is attributeless and formless and so on.

Once a saint in Vṛja was discussing spirituality with some one. A cowherdess heard their discussion. She asked her companion about the terms God and soul etc. The latter said that they should be the other names of their loving Kanhaiyā (Kṛṣṇa) or His neighbours or relatives because these saints are bent upon attaining Him. So they always talk about Him. Similarly the cowherdesses also believe that only Kanhaiyā is theirs and they are His. But they have no desire to receive anything from Him.

Mother Yaśodā says to Dāū (Balarāma), the elder brother to Lord Kṛṣṇa, "Look after this Kanhaiyā because he is very innocent. He should not go away into the dense woods etc." Balarāma replies, 'Kanhaiyā is very wanton. He puts his hand into the holes of snakes and does such other mischiefs. He may be bitten by poisonous snakes etc." So Balarāma and other cowherds look after Kanhaiyā lest he should do any mischief. They don't believe when anyone says that He rears and preserves the entire world because according to them He is only a loving kid.

Once a saint began to narrate the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa to the cowherdesses while talking to them. The cowherdesses said, "The key of the treasure of His glories is with us. He has nothing. So how can he grant anything to anyone?" So one who wants nothing from Him even in adversity or at the time of death should go to Him.

Sage Vālmīki says to Lord Rāma in the Rāmacaritamānasa, "You reside in the heart of the person who loves You naturally without expecting any reward because that is Your own residence" (2/13).

When a devotee has no desire of his own, the Lord becomes loving to him and He resides in him. A devout devotee loves him for His sake, not for his own sake. If he loves Him to get his desire fulfilled, it means that there is no true love, there is attachment or lust or delusion. Therefore the cowherdesses giving a warning to the travellers say, "O travellers, don't go by that street because that is very deadly and horrifying. There a naked boy having dark complexion like black catechu tree, is standing with his hands on his buttocks. In appearance he is like an ascetic. But he robs the travellers of the treasure of their hearts without any exception".

He is called Kṛṣṇa because He attracts everyone towards Him. One who is attracted towards Him becomes His for ever and he remains of no use to anybody in the world. Such a man who is of no use to anybody, is really useful to everyone. But he has no self interest to be served by anyone. When a devotee takes refuge in Him, he has not to adore Him. Adoration like breathing becomes a natural part and parcel of his life. A devotee can't forget Him, he becomes restless without remembering Him even for a moment (Nāradabhaktisūtra 19). Such a noble devotee kicks the Kingdom of the entire universe which is offered to him as a substitute for forgetfulness of the Lord for even a fraction of a moment (Śrīmadbhā. 11/14/14).

In the Bhāgavata it is mentioned – Excellent devotees are those who can't renounce the Lord's lotus feet, which are scarcely available even to the gods, even for half a moment (Śrīmadbhāgavata 11/2/53).

It is declared by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Bhāgavata, "The devotees who have surrendered themselves to Me have no desire to attain the seat either of Brahmā or Indra (the lord of the gods) or the kingdom of this world or the underworld or all yogic perfections or even salvation" (Śrīmadbhāgavata 11/14/14).

Bharata, the brother to Lord Rāma also declares in the Rāmacaritamānasa that he has no desire either for riches or for righteousness or for lust or even for salvation but he wants to be blessed with the boon that he should love (adore) Lord Rāma's feet in all the births (2/204).

Link:–In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa forbids Arjuna to unfold the supreme secret gospel of all the other secrets, as mentioned in the preceding verse to those who are under serving.

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन ।
न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ॥ ६७ ॥

idaṁ te nātapaskāya nābhaktāya kadācana
na cāśuśrūṣave vācyaṁ na ca māṁ yo'bhyasūyati

This is never to be spoken by thee to one who is devoid of austerities or devotion or who is unwilling to hear or who finds fault with Me. 67

Comment:

'Idaṁ te nātapaskāya'— Here the term 'Idam' (This) stands for 'Abandoning all duties, take refuge in Me alone' described in the preceding verse.

Austerity consists in tolerating pain and unfavourable circumstance happily while performing one's duty. The mind is not purified without austerity and without purity a useful bit of advice can't be held. So the Lord declares that this supreme secret of all secrets should not be unfolded to the person who is devoid of austerity. This secret of all secrets should not be unfolded to one who is devoid of austerities i.e., who is intolerant. This tolerance is of four kinds:–

(1) Tolerance in the pairs of opposites: – He should be free from the pairs of opposites such as attachment and aversion, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, praise and blame etc. The men of virtuous deeds are free from delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites (Gītā 7/28); "The undeluded ones are free from the pairs of opposites known as pleasure and pain" (15/5).

(2) Tolerance of impulses:– He resists the impulses of lust, anger, greed and aversion etc. (Gītā 5/23).

(3) Tolerance for religions (doctrines) of others:— He does not doubt his own doctrine nor does he criticize and condemn the doctrines of others. He sees that the discipline of renunciation and of action are one (Gītā 5/5).

(4) Tolerance in the progress of others: — He is not jealous and envious of others when they progress or when they are praised and honoured (Gītā 4/22, 12/15).

The perfected soul possesses these four kinds of tolerance. One who aims at these kinds of tolerance is austere while he who does not aim at them is unaustere.

This most profound secret should not be unfolded to one who is not austere because he will not believe it, he will find fault with it and thus he will have a downfall. Secondly a man may think that he need not grieve because the Lord will liberate him from all sins. By thinking so he may be indulged in evils and may have a downfall. So the Lord orders Arjuna not to impart this secret gospel to one who is devoid of austerities, otherwise he may misuse it.

'Nābhaktāya kadācana'— He who is devoid of devotion and has no faith in God, should not be imparted this supreme secret because he may see things in a perverted way (contrary to the truth) by thinking that the Lord is a braggart Who wants others to carry out His order for His selfish motive. Such an unbeliever by belittling His teaching would have a downfall. So this supreme gospel should not be spoken to such a man.

'Na cāśuśrūṣave vācyam'— This supreme gospel should not be imparted to one who is unwilling to listen to it because he will turn a deaf ear to it. Thus he will commit a sin which will be harmful for him.

'Na ca māṁ yo'bhyasūyati'— This most secret teaching should not be imparted to one who finds fault with Him. He finds fault because his heart is very much impure. By finding fault with him he is deprived of his grace and has a downfall. This defect

is sometimes found even in devotees who have faith in God. So strivers should be aware of this defect. Such men who are free from cavil are released from the bondage of actions (Gītā 3/31). Moreover He also declares that the man who listens to this gospel with faith, being free from cavil, shall attain to the happy worlds of the righteous (Gītā 18/71).

When the Lord declares that this supreme secret is not to be spoken to such a person, He does not want him to be deprived of this gospel. But he without having faith in the Lord and His words may regard Him as boastful and selfish and thus by accusing Him may have a fall. So it should not be spoken to such a person.

Link:–In the next two verses the Lord explains the reward of propogating this gospel of the Gītā among his devotees and declares that such a person is the most loving to Him.

य इमं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।
भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥ ६८ ॥

ya imaṁ paramaṁ guhyaṁ madbhakteṣvabhidhāsyati
bhaktiṁ mayi parāṁ kṛtvā māmevaiṣyatyasaṁśayaḥ

He who with supreme devotion to Me teaches this supreme secret to My devotees, shall doubtless come to Me. 68

Comment:

'Bhaktiṁ mayi parāṁ kṛtvā'— The supreme devotion means that the person does not impart this gospel of the Gītā in order to receive praise, honour, fame and gifts etc. But his aim is to develop devotion to Him, to meditate on Him, to propagate His teachings, to liberate the people from sorrows and sufferings and to lead them to salvation.

There is a difference between the devotion mentioned in the fifty-fourth verse of this chapter and in this verse. There a Sāṅkhya-yogī having become one with Brahma (the Absolute) attains supreme devotion to the Lord i.e., he realizes his real affinity with God which he has had since time immemorial. But here a striver without having any worldly desire for praise and honour etc., in the least, yearns for devotion to Him.

'Ya imaṁ paramaṁ guhyam'— The teaching of the Gītā as imparted in the whole Gītā in the form of a dialogue between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna is the supreme secret. The expression 'Supreme secret' also includes whatever is secret or more secret or the most secret.

'Madbhakteṣvabhidhāsyati'— A devotee is he who has faith in the Lord and His words and who wants to listen to His teaching. One who declares this teaching to His devotees attains Him.

In the preceding verse in the expression 'Nābhaktāya' singular number was used while here in 'Madbhakteṣu' plural number has been used. Why? The reason is that if there is only one person, who is devoid of austerities or devotion or who is unwilling to hear or who cavils, among many others, the speaker should impart the gospel of the Gītā because it will be beneficial to all of them except one. When a man feeds the sparrows with grains, sometimes even a crow comes to eat those grains. But the man wants to feed the sparrow only. Similarly a preacher (speaker) imparts the teaching of the Gītā only to those who are qualified and deserving to listen to it.

'Māmevaiṣyatyasaṁśayaḥ'— If a person teaches this supreme secret to His devotees aiming at God-Realization, he will doubtlessly attain Him. The reason is that when even a man worshipping him through the performance of his own duty attains perfection (18/46) and also through the offer of bodily actions attains Him (9/27-28); why should he not attain him by propagating the gospel of the Gītā having the aim of supreme devotion to Him?

preceptor in order to know the real essence and the saint or preceptor explains it. The striver reflects seriously upon it. Then he realizes where he stands. Having known the real essence, nothing remains to be known by him. It is called the sacrifice of knowledge. But here Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that He will be worshipped through the sacrifice of knowledge by him who studies this secret dialogue between them. The reason is as a loving devotee is pleased and thrilled when he is reminded of the Lord by someone, similarly when the Lord sees anyone studying the Gītā, He is reminded of his devotee having exclusive devotion to Him and the teaching imparted by him to others. So he gets pleased and thrilled and by assuming this study as the sacrifice of knowledge, He is worshipped. By studying this gospel, this knowledge specially sprouts forth in his mind.

'Iti me matiḥ' —When the Lord declares that it is His conviction, He means to say that He listens to the gospel of the Gītā when anyone studies it because He pervades everywhere (Gītā 9/4) and His ears are everywhere (Gītā 13/13). Having heard this gospel, He is overwhelmed with knowledge, love and grace, and His intellect is immersed in his memory. Thus though he does not worship Him, he merely studies the Gītā yet He accepts it worship to Him i.e., He by His grace awards him the fruit of the sacrifice of knowledge.

Secondly while he studies the Gītā or learns it by heart, he has a sweet memory of this dialogue, so He assumes that he is rendering a great service to Him.

Once in a public meeting a boy was brought by a priest. The priest had trained him in the art of oration, and had given him a written speech. The boy had learnt it by heart. When the boy delivered the speech with right actions and expressions, the chairman and the audience were so much pleased with him that they showered money on him and congratulated him from their hearts. But in fact that boy did not understand the subject matter of the speech, as he was not well educated. He had merely learnt it by heart without understanding it. Similarly when a person recites the verses of the Gītā even without understanding them, the Lord is worshipped through the sacrifice of knowledge because the Lord understands them well in the same way as the chairman and the audience understood the speech of the boy. Moreover He Himself resides at such a place; and as audience was present in the speech of the boy, at the place where the Gītā is studied, all sacred-places (places of pilgrimage) such as Prayāga etc., as well as gods, sages, divine snakes, cowherds, cowherdesses and ascetics such as Nārada and Uddhava etc., also reside there.

Link:–There are some people who are unable even to study the dialogue. What should they do? The answer comes in the next verse.

श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।
सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभाँल्लोकान्प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥ ७१ ॥

śraddhāvānanasūyaśca śṛṇuyādapi yo naraḥ
so'pi muktaḥ śubhāँllokānprāpnuyātpuṇyakarmaṇām

And the man who listens to it with faith and without scoffing, even he, being liberated from sins, shall attain to the happy worlds of the righteous. 71

Comment:

'Śraddhāvānanasūyaśca śṛṇuyādapi yo naraḥ so'pi muktaḥ śubhallokānprāpnuyātpuṇya karmaṇām' — 'Śraddhāvān' is he who has faith in the Gītā and holds it in reverence while 'Anasūyaḥ' is he who does not find fault with the Lord or His utterance in the

least. Such a person who listens to the gospel of the Gītā with faith and without finding fault with it, being liberated from all sins, attains to the worlds of the righteous.

The Lord by using the term 'Api' twice means to say that not to talk of the person who propagates and studies the Gītā, even he who listens to it, being liberated from sins, attains to the happy world of the righteous.

In a man's speech generally there are four defects. They are— doubt, heedlessness, desire and ambiguity. But the Lord's gospel is totally free from all these defects because the Lord is the extreme limit of purity where there is not even an iota of impurity . Therefore there is no possibility of any doubt in his gospel. If any person is unable to understand this gospel or he doubts any fact, he should think that he is unable to have a thorough grasp of the subject because of his imperfect intellect. By having such sort of belief his carping spirit comes to an end. Devotion with faith also destroys the carping spirit.

There was a disciple of Caitanya Mahāprabhu who while studying the Gītā got so much engrossed in it that sometimes there was a burst of laughter while at the next moment there was a burst of tears in him. But his pronunciation was not correct. Some one complained to Caitanya Mahāprabhu that his disciple was a hypocrite as he shed tears while studying the Gītā though he could not pronounce the verses correctly. Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked the disciple, "Do you understand the verse while studying the Gītā ?" He said, "No", "Then why do you burst into weeping?" He replied, "When I study the Gītā, I behold Lord Kṛṣṇa and his devotee, Arjuna sitting and talking. So I am overwhelmed with emotions by beholding them and listening to their dialogue." Hearing his answer Caitanya Mahāprabhu was very much pleased with him. If such a devotee listens to the gospel of the Gītā with faith, he attains salvation without any doubt. He being liberated from all sins, attains to the happy worlds of the righteous.

Here the expression 'Puṇyakarmaṇām' does not stand for those righteous persons who perform righteous deeds such as sacrifice etc., in order to receive their fruit because they have to return to the world of mortals (Gītā 9/21) again and again. Here the persons of righteous deeds are those devotees who attain to Vaikuṇṭha, the Abode of Lord Viṣṇu; Sāketa, the Abode of Lord Rāma; Goloka the Abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa; Kailāsa, the Abode of Lord Śiva according to their worship to their favourite Deity. All of them realize God merely by listening to the gospel of the Gītā with faith and without scoffing.

Link:–Having glorified the hearing of the Gītā in the preceding verse, the Lord in order to reveal the significance of the hearing of the Gītā to all the person, puts Arjuna a question in the next verse, although He knew everything.

कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा ।
कच्चिदज्ञानसंमोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनञ्जय ॥ ७२ ॥

kaccidetacchrutaṁ pārtha tvayaikāgreṇa cetasā
kaccidajñānasaṁmohaḥ pranaṣṭaste dhanañjaya

O Pārtha (Arjuna), has this been heard by you with one-pointed mind? O winner of wealth (Arjuna) has your delusion, born of ignorance, been destroyed ? 72

Comment:

'Kaccidetacchrutaṁ pārtha tvayaikāgreṇa cetasā' —The term 'Etat' (This) denotes much nearness. So Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna whether he has heard what He explained in the seventy-

first verse-that a man should listen to the gospel of the Gītā with faith and without scoffing. The Lord means to say whether he has listened to this gospel with faith and with an uncarping spirit.

By the expression 'Ekāgreṇa cetasā' the Lord means to ask Arjuna whether he listened to His supreme word, the most secret of all of taking refuge in Him alone (18/66), which was promised by Him in the sixty-fourth verse and which was forbidden for one who is devoid of austerities in the sixty-seventh verse.

'Kaccidajñānasaṁmohaḥ pranaṣṭaste dhanañjaya —Lord Kṛṣṇa puts the second question to Arjuna whether his delusion, born of ignorance, has been destroyed. If his delusion has been destroyed, it means that he listened to the gospel preached by Him otherwise not because it is a fact that the delusion of the person who listens to this gospel with faith and without scoffing, is dispelled.

Lord Kṛṣṇa addresses Arjuna by the term 'Pārtha' (son of Pṛthā viz., Kuntī) in order to show His affection for him. He addressed him by this term in the twenty-fifth verse of the first chapter when He asked him to behold all the kinsmen in order to arouse delusion of kinship and to make him restless to be free from this delusion. So Lord Kṛṣṇa here again addresses him as 'Pārtha' to ask him whether his delusion of kinship has been destroyed.

By using the term 'Dhanañjaya, Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that he is called the conqueror of wealth by conquering the wealth of kings. But real wealth consists in the destruction of delusion. So he should become a conqueror of wealth in the real sense of the term.

Link:–Arjuna in the next verse answers the question put in the preceding verse.

अर्जुन उवाच

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।
स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥ ७३ ॥

arjuna uvāca

naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtirlabdhā tvatprasādānmayācyuta
sthito'smi gatasandehaḥ kariṣye vacanaṁ tava

Arjuna said :

O Acyuta (Kṛṣṇa), my delusion is destroyed and I have gained Knowledge (memory) through Your grace. I stand firm with my doubts dispelled. I shall act according to Your word. 73

Comment:

'Naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtirlabdhā tvatprasādānmayācyuta'— Arjuna addresses the Lord as 'Acyuta' to emphasize the fact that He never deviates from His divine nature while a man deviates from the self and has a fall. The term 'Acyuta' has been used three times in the Gītā by Arjuna. First (in 1/21) he asked him to place his chariot between the two armies. Secondly (in 11/42) he prayed to His cosmic form. There was no change in His state. At last (in 18/73) he uses this term here when he says that he will act according to His word. Thus there are three kinds of states of mind of Arjuna at the beginning, the middle and the end but the Lord remains uniform without any change in his state.

In the second chapter Arjuna surrendered himself to the Lord by declaring, "I am your disciple. Do instruct me who have taken refuge in you" (2/7). In this verse that refuge attains perfection.

At the end of the tenth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna, "What need is there for the detailed knowledge ? I stand

supporting the whole universe with a single fragment of Myself." Having heard this declaration, Arjuna could know the Lord's singularity and received a kind of enlightenment which forced Arjuna to utter the words, "My delusion has been dispelled" (Gītā 11/1). But having seen the terrible cosmic form of the Lord, when Arjuna was confounded with fear, He asked him neither to be afraid nor bewildered (11/49). It proves that Arjuna's delusion was not destroyed then. But here in response to Lord Kṛṣṇa's question Arjuna answers that his delusion is destroyed and he has gained knowledge (memory)*.

There is a vast difference between the memory of the mind and that of the self. The reality of a thing is established through the proof of senses and mind while the existence of God can't be established through this proof i.e., God can't be confined within the range of the proof of senses and mind.† God is beyond all proofs. But the entire universe is within the sphere of proof while proof comes within the sphere of the knower.

The knower is one while proof can be of different kinds. Some scholars regard proof (Pramāṇa) of three kinds— evident, by guess, of the vedas while others regard it as of four kinds— evident (Pratyakṣa), by guess (Anumāna), that with which something is compared (Upamāna) and word (Śabda) while some others besides these four regard it of three more kinds— reasoning (Arthāpatti), in apprehension (Anupalabdhi) and traditional theory (Aitihya). Thus scholars differ in their opinions as far as the kinds of proof are concerned, but all of them agree that the knower is one. The proof is a kind of inclination while the knower (self) is a kind of realization.

As far as the term 'Smṛti' (Memory) is concerned it has been explained (1) The revelation of something already experienced. (2) Memory means the knowledge born of the past influences (impressions).

This memory is an inclination of mind. This inclination can be of five kinds–proof (Pramāṇa), error (Viparyaya), alternate (Vikalpa), sleep (Nidrā) and memory (Smṛti) and each of these kinds can further be subdivided into two parts— difficult and easy. The inclination for the world is difficult i.e., it binds a man, while the inclination for the Lord is easy as it frees a man from bondage and sufferings. Ignorance is the cause of these inclinations. But the Lord is free from ignorance. So He can be known by the self, not by any inclination or cause. When his memory is once gained He can never be forgotten while in the inclination of the mind there is sometimes memory while at the other time there is forgetfulness.

A man forgets the Lord when he accepts the existence of the unreal world and attaches importance to it. Though this forgetfulness has been since time immemorial, yet it comes to an end. When it comes to an end, the memory of one's self is aroused which is called 'Smṛtirlabdhā' i.e., the veil is removed and the reality is revealed.

This memory according to the inclination (taste) of the strivers can be divided into three kinds – (1) Discipline of Action i.e., memory of the performance of action without expecting any reward. (2) Discipline

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* Here Arjuna's both kinds of delusion — the mundane (Gītā 2/52) and Vedic textual (Gītā 2/53) have been destroyed.

† We can know the world through (proof). But God Who is the base and illuminator of knowledge can't be known by knowledge because the illumined can't illuminate the illuminator. So He can be known by having faith in Him.

Those who have faith in the scriptures, accept the existence of God by regarding them as authority while those who have faith in the liberated souls accept His existence according to their word. But the mind and senses can't prove His existence. Therefore the believers believe in his existence through the scriptures and the liberated souls by having faith in them while the non-believers can't accept the existence of God by regarding the scriptures and liberated souls as authority. It means that whatever is known through senses and mind is direct proof while the proof of assumption etc., is the argumentative proof, the progenitor of direct proof. But as far as proof of the saints and the scriptures is concerned, that can be gained through faith.

न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृत्तमः ।
भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ॥ ६९ ॥

na ca tasmānmanuṣyeṣu kaścinme priyakṛttamaḥ
bhavitā na ca me tasmādanyaḥ priyataro bhuvi

There is none among men who does dearer service to Me than he; nor shall there be another on earth dearer to Me than he. 69

Comment:

'Na ca tasmānmanuṣyeṣu kaścinme priyakṛttamaḥ'— A person who wants to receive and secure material things and attaches importance to them can't be said to be endowed with supreme devotion. But he, who without having any desire in the least for the mundane things etc., having the only aim of God-Realization or God's vision or God's devotion wants to translate the teaching of the Gītā into practice, can be said to be endowed with supreme devotion. Such a person is qualified to propagate the gospal of the Gītā. If sometimes he happens to have desire to receive honour and praise etc., that desire can't last much longer because it is not his aim.

There is none dearer to him than he who propagates the gospel of the Gītā among men because there is no other job more loving to Him than propagation of this gospel. Moreover he does so only for the Lord's sake without expecting any reward in the form of praise, honour, name and fame etc. As far as mundane desires are concerned, they can be satisfied in other births such as of gods, birds, beasts, insects, trees, plants and creatures of hells also. But the success of human life lies in God-Realization and in becoming beloved of Him.

'Bhavitā na ca me tasmādanyaḥ priyataro bhuvi' —A devotee who has a little desire to win praise, honour, name and fame, without having the only aim of God-Realization and without practising the teachings of the Gītā but propagates the gospel of the Gītā through adoration, recitation, publication, memorization and cheap sale and getting them done by others, is dearer to the Lord while he who propagates the teaching of his own sect or religion is only dear to Him.

A striver can translate most of the teaching of the Gītā into practice very easily. Every person without any distinction of caste, creed, colour, country, stage of life etc., who performs his duty for the welfare of others without expecting reward and without having any desire while performing the professional and physical activities (eating, drinking, sleeping etc.) can attain God-Realization and supreme bliss (Gītā 6/22).

The Gospel of the Gītā does not force anyone to change his caste, creed, colour, country and actions etc. But it imparts the teachings that a man should purify his emotions and aim. A person by imparting the gospel of the Gītā to His devotees will remove their doubts and obstacles and enable them to realize God easily and quickly. So such a person will be most loving to God because He is very much pleased with those people who help others in realizing Him. The Lord feels very much happy and satisfied with salvation of human beings.

Link:–What should a striver do if he is not qualified to propagate the gospel of the Gī The Lord answers this question in the next verse.

अध्येष्यते च य इमं धर्म्यं संवादमावयोः ।
ज्ञानयज्ञेन तेनाहमिष्टः स्यामिति मे मतिः ॥ ७० ॥

adhyeṣyate ca ya imaṁ dharmyaṁ saṁvādamāvayoḥ
jñānayajñena tenāhamiṣṭaḥ syāmiti me matiḥ

And he who studies this sacred dialogue of ours, by him I shall be worshipped through the sacrifice of knowledge (wisdom) — such is my conviction. 70

Comment:

'Adhyeṣyate ca ya imaṁ dharmyaṁ saṁvādamāvayoḥ' —Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that this dialogue is the gist of the scriptures. Though they had been living together for years, yet they could not have such a righteous dialogue. This is an unique occasion for this sort of dialogue.

Real curiosity is not aroused so long as a man does not get tired of the mundane affairs and is not dispassionate. When he becomes restless in the mundane maze to find out the way, he has a heart-to-heart talk with the person from whom he expects right guidance. He becomes his pupil, takes refuge in him and put him questions freely.

The more curious a pupil is to satisfy his curiosity, the more enthusiastic the preceptor is to satisfy it with new explanations and arguments. When a cow feeds the calf with her milk, the more hungry the calf is, with more force he pulls the udder and so the whole milk of the cow comes to her udders from other limbs. Similarly when an inquisitive striver asks questions again and again, new ideas and answers crop up in the mind of the speaker. Then the dialogue between the speaker and the listener is excellent.

The real dialogue between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna begins with 2/54 when Arjuna curiously asks Him "What are the marks of the man who has steady wisdom?" Before this Arjuna never asked a question with such curiosity nor did the Lord have such a spontaneous flow to express His views before. This dialogue is the gist of the Vedas and the scriptures. It can lead a man to salvation, very easily even in the most adverse circumstances, if he translates this gospel into practice. In adverse circumstances he instead of losing heart should make their best possible use i.e., he should renounce the desire for favourable circumstances because unfavourable circumstances destroy his sins and enable him to renounce the desire for desirable circumstances. The more desire a man has for favourable circumstances, the more terrible are the unfavourable circumstances. As soon as he starts renouncing his desire for desirable circumstances by degrees, to that extent his attachment to the agreeable will be renounced and his fear of the disagreeable will perish. When he becomes totally free from attachment and fear, he will become equanimous. Thus equanimity has been called Yoga and those who are established in equanimity are established in God. In the Gītā different disciplines as of action, of knowledge, of Devotion, of Meditation as the means to realize God, have been described.

The term 'Adhyeṣyate' (will study) denotes that the one who studies the dialogue in the form of the Gītā, learns it by heart, tries to understand its gospel, will develop a curiosity to know this gospel more and more. The more curious he is, the more clearly it will be unfolded to him. When its secret is revealed to him, he will translate it into practice. By thoroughly practising its teachings, he will become the very image of the Gītā. By seeing him the people will be reminded of the Gītā in the same way as people of Ayodhyā were reminded of Lakṣmaṇa by seeing Guha, the chief (king) of the primitive tribe called 'Niṣāda'.

'Jñānayajñena tenāhamiṣṭaḥ syām'—Sacrifice is of two kinds— of wealth and of knowledge. In the former there is predominance of things and actions while in the latter there is predominance of knowledge. In the sacrifice of knowledge a striver puts questions to a saint or a

preceptor in order to know the real essence and the saint or preceptor explains it. The striver reflects seriously upon it. Then he realizes where he stands. Having known the real essence, nothing remains to be known by him. It is called the sacrifice of knowledge. But here Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that He will be worshipped through the sacrifice of knowledge by him who studies this secret dialogue between them. The reason is as a loving devotee is pleased and thrilled when he is reminded of the Lord by someone, similarly when the Lord sees anyone studying the Gītā, He is reminded of his devotee having exclusive devotion to Him and the teaching imparted by him to others. So he gets pleased and thrilled and by assuming this study as the sacrifice of knowledge, He is worshipped. By studying this gospel, this knowledge specially sprouts forth in his mind.

'Iti me matiḥ' —When the Lord declares that it is His conviction, He means to say that He listens to the gospel of the Gītā when anyone studies it because He pervades everywhere (Gītā 9/4) and His ears are everywhere (Gītā 13/13). Having heard this gospel, He is overwhelmed with knowledge, love and grace, and His intellect is immersed in his memory. Thus though he does not worship Him, he merely studies the Gītā yet He accepts it worship to Him i.e., He by His grace awards him the fruit of the sacrifice of knowledge.

Secondly while he studies the Gītā or learns it by heart, he has a sweet memory of this dialogue, so He assumes that he is rendering a great service to Him.

Once in a public meeting a boy was brought by a priest. The priest had trained him in the art of oration, and had given him a written speech. The boy had learnt it by heart. When the boy delivered the speech with right actions and expressions, the chairman and the audience were so much pleased with him that they showered money on him and congratulated him from their hearts. But in fact that boy did not understand the subject matter of the speech, as he was not well educated. He had merely learnt it by heart without understanding it. Similarly when a person recites the verses of the Gītā even without understanding them, the Lord is worshipped through the sacrifice of knowledge because the Lord understands them well in the same way as the chairman and the audience understood the speech of the boy. Moreover He Himself resides at such a place; and as audience was present in the speech of the boy, at the place where the Gītā is studied, all sacred-places (places of pilgrimage) such as Prayāga etc., as well as gods, sages, divine snakes, cowherds, cowherdesses and ascetics such as Nārada and Uddhava etc., also reside there.

Link:–There are some people who are unable even to study the dialogue. What should they do? The answer comes in the next verse.

श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।
सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभाँल्लोकान्प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥ ७१ ॥

śraddhāvānanasūyaśca śṛṇuyādapi yo naraḥ
so'pi muktaḥ śubhāँllokānprāpnuyātpuṇyakarmaṇām

And the man who listens to it with faith and without scoffing, even he, being liberated from sins, shall attain to the happy worlds of the righteous. 71

Comment:

'Śraddhāvānanasūyaśca śṛṇuyādapi yo naraḥ so'pi muktaḥ śubhallokānprāpnuyātpuṇya karmaṇām' — 'Śraddhāvān' is he who has faith in the Gītā and holds it in reverence while 'Anasūyaḥ' is he who does not find fault with the Lord or His utterance in the

least. Such a person who listens to the gospel of the Gītā with faith and without finding fault with it, being liberated from all sins, attains to the worlds of the righteous.

The Lord by using the term 'Api' twice means to say that not to talk of the person who propagates and studies the Gītā, even he who listens to it, being liberated from sins, attains to the happy world of the righteous.

In a man's speech generally there are four defects. They are— doubt, heedlessness, desire and ambiguity. But the Lord's gospel is totally free from all these defects because the Lord is the extreme limit of purity where there is not even an iota of impurity . Therefore there is no possibility of any doubt in his gospel. If any person is unable to understand this gospel or he doubts any fact, he should think that he is unable to have a thorough grasp of the subject because of his imperfect intellect. By having such sort of belief his carping spirit comes to an end. Devotion with faith also destroys the carping spirit.

There was a disciple of Caitanya Mahāprabhu who while studying the Gītā got so much engrossed in it that sometimes there was a burst of laughter while at the next moment there was a burst of tears in him. But his pronunciation was not correct. Some one complained to Caitanya Mahāprabhu that his disciple was a hypocrite as he shed tears while studying the Gītā though he could not pronounce the verses correctly. Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked the disciple, "Do you understand the verse while studying the Gītā ?" He said, "No", "Then why do you burst into weeping?" He replied, "When I study the Gītā, I behold Lord Kṛṣṇa and his devotee, Arjuna sitting and talking. So I am overwhelmed with emotions by beholding them and listening to their dialogue." Hearing his answer Caitanya Mahāprabhu was very much pleased with him. If such a devotee listens to the gospel of the Gītā with faith, he attains salvation without any doubt. He being liberated from all sins, attains to the happy worlds of the righteous.

Here the expression 'Puṇyakarmaṇām' does not stand for those righteous persons who perform righteous deeds such as sacrifice etc., in order to receive their fruit because they have to return to the world of mortals (Gītā 9/21) again and again. Here the persons of righteous deeds are those devotees who attain to Vaikuṇṭha, the Abode of Lord Viṣṇu; Sāketa, the Abode of Lord Rāma; Goloka the Abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa; Kailāsa, the Abode of Lord Śiva according to their worship to their favourite Deity. All of them realize God merely by listening to the gospel of the Gītā with faith and without scoffing.

Link:–Having glorified the hearing of the Gītā in the preceding verse, the Lord in order to reveal the significance of the hearing of the Gītā to all the person, puts Arjuna a question in the next verse, although He knew everything.

कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा ।
कच्चिदज्ञानसंमोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनञ्जय ॥ ७२ ॥

kaccidetacchrutaṁ pārtha tvayaikāgreṇa cetasā
kaccidajñānasaṁmohaḥ pranaṣṭaste dhanañjaya

O Pārtha (Arjuna), has this been heard by you with one-pointed mind? O winner of wealth (Arjuna) has your delusion, born of ignorance, been destroyed ? 72

Comment:

'Kaccidetacchrutaṁ pārtha tvayaikāgreṇa cetasā' —The term 'Etat' (This) denotes much neamess. So Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna whether he has heard what He explained in the seventy-

first verse-that a man should listen to the gospel of the Gītā with faith and without scoffing. The Lord means to say whether he has listened to this gospel with faith and with an uncarping spirit.

By the expression 'Ekāgreṇa cetasā' the Lord means to ask Arjuna whether he listened to His supreme word, the most secret of all of taking refuge in Him alone (18/66), which was promised by Him in the sixty-fourth verse and which was forbidden for one who is devoid of austerities in the sixty-seventh verse.

'Kaccidajñānasaṁmohaḥ pranaṣṭaste dhanañjaya —Lord Kṛṣṇa puts the second question to Arjuna whether his delusion, born of ignorance, has been destroyed. If his delusion has been destroyed, it means that he listened to the gospel preached by Him otherwise not because it is a fact that the delusion of the person who listens to this gospel with faith and without scoffing, is dispelled.

Lord Kṛṣṇa addresses Arjuna by the term 'Pārtha' (son of Pṛthā viz., Kuntī) in order to show His affection for him. He addressed him by this term in the twenty-fifth verse of the first chapter when He asked him to behold all the kinsmen in order to arouse delusion of kinship and to make him restless to be free from this delusion. So Lord Kṛṣṇa here again addresses him as 'Pārtha' to ask him whether his delusion of kinship has been destroyed.

By using the term 'Dhanañjaya, Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that he is called the conqueror of wealth by conquering the wealth of kings. But real wealth consists in the destruction of delusion. So he should become a conqueror of wealth in the real sense of the term.

Link:–Arjuna in the next verse answers the question put in the preceding verse.

अर्जुन उवाच

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।
स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥ ७३ ॥

arjuna uvāca

naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtirlabdhā tvatprasādānmayācyuta
sthito'smi gatasandehaḥ kariṣye vacanaṁ tava

Arjuna said :

O Acyuta (Kṛṣṇa), my delusion is destroyed and I have gained Knowledge (memory) through Your grace. I stand firm with my doubts dispelled. I shall act according to Your word. 73

Comment:

'Naṣṭo mohaḥ : smṛtirlabdhā tvatprasādānmayācyuta'— Arjuna addresses the Lord as 'Acyuta' to emphasize the fact that He never deviates from His divine nature while a man deviates from the self and has a fall. The term 'Acyuta' has been used three times in the Gītā by Arjuna. First (in 1/21) he asked him to place his chariot between the two armies. Secondly (in 11/42) he prayed to His cosmic form. There was no change in His state. At last (in 18/73) he uses this term here when he says that he will act according to His word. Thus there are three kinds of states of mind of Arjuna at the beginning, the middle and the end but the Lord remains uniform without any change in his state.

In the second chapter Arjuna surrendered himself to the Lord by declaring, "I am your disciple. Do instruct me who have taken refuge in you" (2/7). In this verse that refuge attains perfection.

At the end of the tenth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna, "What need is there for the detailed knowledge ? I stand

supporting the whole universe with a single fragment of Myself." Having heard this declaration, Arjuna could know the Lord's singularity and received a kind of enlightenment which forced Arjuna to utter the words, "My delusion has been dispelled" (Gītā 11/1). But having seen the terrible cosmic form of the Lord, when Arjuna was confounded with fear, He asked him neither to be afraid nor bewildered (11/49). It proves that Arjuna's delusion was not destroyed then. But here in response to Lord Kṛṣṇa's question Arjuna answers that his delusion is destroyed and he has gained knowledge (memory)*.

There is a vast difference between the memory of the mind and that of the self. The reality of a thing is established through the proof of senses and mind while the existence of God can't be established through this proof i.e., God can't be confined within the range of the proof of senses and mind.† God is beyond all proofs. But the entire universe is within the sphere of proof while proof comes within the sphere of the knower.

The knower is one while proof can be of different kinds. Some scholars regard proof (Pramāṇa) of three kinds— evident, by guess, of the vedas while others regard it as of four kinds— evident (Pratyakṣa), by guess (Anumāna), that with which something is compared (Upamāna) and word (Śabda) while some others besides these four regard it of three more kinds— reasoning (Arthāpatti), in apprehension (Anupalabdhi) and traditional theory (Aitihya). Thus scholars differ in their opinions as far as the kinds of proof are concerned, but all of them agree that the knower is one. The proof is a kind of inclination while the knower (self) is a kind of realization.

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This memory is an inclination of mind. This inclination can be of five kinds–proof (Pramāṇa), error (Viparyaya), alternate (Vikalpa), sleep (Nidrā) and memory (Smṛti) and each of these kinds can further be subdivided into two parts— difficult and easy. The inclination for the world is difficult i.e., it binds a man, while the inclination for the Lord is easy as it frees a man from bondage and sufferings. Ignorance is the cause of these inclinations. But the Lord is free from ignorance. So He can be known by the self, not by any inclination or cause. When his memory is once gained He can never be forgotten while in the inclination of the mind there is sometimes memory while at the other time there is forgetfulness.

A man forgets the Lord when he accepts the existence of the unreal world and attaches importance to it. Though this forgetfulness has been since time immemorial, yet it comes to an end. When it comes to an end, the memory of one's self is aroused which is called 'Smṛtirlabdhā' i.e., the veil is removed and the reality is revealed.

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† We can know the world through (proof). But God Who is the base and illuminator of knowledge can't be known by knowledge because the illumined can't illuminate the illuminator. So He can be known by having faith in Him.

Those who have faith in the scriptures, accept the existence of God by regarding them as authority while those who have faith in the liberated souls accept His existence according to their word. But the mind and senses can't prove His existence. Therefore the believers believe in his existence through the scriptures and the liberated souls by having faith in them while the non-believers can't accept the existence of God by regarding the scriptures and liberated souls as authority. It means that whatever is known through senses and mind is direct proof while the proof of assumption etc., is the argumentative proof, the progenitor of direct proof. But as far as proof of the saints and the scriptures is concerned, that can be gained through faith.

of Knowledge i.e., memory of the self. (3) Discipline of Devotion i.e., memory of one's relationship with God. Thus the memory of these three disciplines is aroused because though all the three disciplines are self-evident and eternal, a man forgets them.

When a man accepts the existence of the worldly things and attaches importance to them, he is attached to them— this is forgetfulness (veil) of the Discipline of Action. When he is attached to the unreal, he has a disinclination for the self— this is forgetfulness of the Discipline of knowledge. The man(self) is a fragment of God. But he, having a disinclination for God, has an inclination for the world and is attached to it. It is because of this attachment that his devotion is veiled— this is forgetfulness of the Discipline of Devotion.

Here destruction of forgetfulness (disinclination) for the self is Smṛti (memory). This gaining of memory (knowledge) of the self is the real memory which when once gained can't be lost because the self ever remains uniform without undergoing any modifications. The memory of the mind can be lost because being the evolute of Prakṛti (Matter) it is changeable.

It means that when a man identifies the self with the world and the body, it is called 'Vismṛti' (Forgetfulness). But when by separating himself from the world and the body he realizes the self, it is Smṛti (Memory or Knowledge). The memory of the self is one's own memory without the help of any other means such as senses and mind etc., while the memory of the mind is an inclination of the mind. As a man has the knowledge of his entity without any proof; without the help of any organs through his own self, similarly Self-Realization is through one's own self. It is beyond all organs and instruments etc.

The memory of the self is gained instantly without any labour. Karṇa was the son of Kuntī. But when he was abandoned by Kuntī after his birth, he was brought up by Rādhā, the wife to a bard named Adhiratha. So he took her to be his mother. But when he came to know from the sun-god that his mother was Kuntī, he gained memory without making any effort.

The self being a fragment of God is desireless, pure and liberated. But a man having forgetfulness (disinclination) of the self, has desires, becomes impure and is bound. But when he has no affinity at all with mind etc., his memory (knowledge) is automatically aroused without making any effort and without any practice. When once it is aroused, it is not lost and is not to be aroused again.

Memory (Knowledge) is aroused by God's grace. His grace is showered upon a man when he has an inclination for Him. He has an inclination for Him when he has a disinclination for the world. As Arjuna said to Lord Kṛṣṇa that he would act according to His word, similarly a devotee without depending on the world should declare that he will act according to his word only.

It means that this memory (knowledge) is gained by the Lord's grace when a striver has an inclination for Him. So Arjuna says that he has gained knowledge (memory) through His grace. The Lord continuously showers His limitless grace upon all beings but a man realizes His grace when he has an inclination for Him.

By the expression 'Tvatprasādān-mayācyuta' Arjuna wants to say to Lord Kṛṣṇa that He by His grace has disclosed to him the most secret essence. So it is only by His grace that he has gained knowledge (memory). First he requested Him to instruct him who had sought refuge in Him but then he said that he would not fight. Till he got Self-Realization, the Lord goaded him. It was only His divine grace. Even unasked He disclosed the supreme secret topic of surrender to him (18/64-66). Thus by His grace he could know the reality and his delusion was dispelled.

'Sthito'smi gatasandehaḥ vacanam tava'— Arjuna says to Lord Kṛṣṇa that his doubt whether he should wage the war or not (2/6) is dispelled totally and he is established in reality. It means that he has no desire of his own, he will act according to His word.

Here a point needs attention. First Arjuna had delusion because of his attachment to his kith and kin. There the Lord declared the process, "When a man thinks of the sense-objects, attachment for them arises; from attachment springs up desire; from desire ensues anger; from anger arises delusion; from delusion loss of memory; from loss of memory, the destruction of discrimination; from destruction of discrimination he perishes (Gītā 2/62-63). Arjuna by reminding the Lord of that process declares that his delusion is dispelled and he has gained memory which was destroyed by delusion. In response to the statement that from loss of memory there is destruction of discrimination, Arjuna says that his doubt is dispelled. In response to the statement that from destruction of discrimination one perishes, Arjuna declares that he stands firm. By saying so Arjuna wants to explain to Lord Kṛṣṇa that he has listened to the gospel of the Gītā and so he remembers it. But as far as the destruction of his delusion is concerned, it is only because of His grace. Thus the description of delusion as described there and here is one and the same.

In the second chapter from the sixty-first to the sixty-third verses the Lord declared that wisdom of the person whose senses are under control is steady. It means that when a person having a disinclination for the world depends only on God, his intelligence is firmly set. If he does not depend only on Him, his mind thinks of the sense-objects and then the process of attachment, desire, anger, delusion etc., follows. They ruin a man because they are demoniac propensities. But here is the description of his progress. When he having a disinclination for the world has an inclination for God, his delusion is dispelled because he possesses a divine nature. It means that a person goes to ruin, if he having a disinclination for the Lord, is overpowered by his senses— is described there. But here when a man has an inclination for God, it is by His grace that he gains memory (knowledge) of his real affinity with God.

In the spiritual sphere God's grace is a more effective means than hearing of texts, cognition, constant musing, meditation and trance etc. The reason is that when a striver follows any spiritual discipline by depending on his own effort, he maintains subtle egoism which perishes only when the striver totally depends on the Lord's grace without regarding it as the fruit of his effort.

A Vital Fact

Arjuna said that he had gained memory. The question arises why he had lost it. When a man (soul) by identifying himself with the unreal attaches importance to it, he forgets the self. By forgetting the self he thinks that the shortage of the unreal is shortage in him. Similarly by identifying himself with the body, he regards the death and birth of the body as his own death and birth and he regarded his father rather than the Lord as his creator. So he became forgetful of the Lord.

If a question is raised whether the mistake was made prior or affinity with the non-self was assumed prior. In other words whether through ignorance he assumed affinity with the non-self first or through affinity with the non-self there was ignorance; the answer is that the Lord bestows this human body so that man (soul) may be free from the cycle of birth and death which he has been following since time immemorial and may attain infinitė bliss viz., God-Realization. God felt bored all alone (Bṛhadāraṇyaka 1/4/3). The Lord created this human being in order to play with him. The game can be played smoothly and freely when both the players are free. So the Lord gave him freedom as well as discrimination so that he could distinguish the real from the unreal. If the Lord had not bestowed upon him freedom and discrimination, he might have been like a beast without any speciality. But man misused this freedom and was attached to the unreal pleasures and prosperity. This was his error of judgment. Now the question arises why he is attached to the unreal. The reason is that he wants to enjoy the transitory pleasures without thinking of their result (The strivers are those who think of the result while the worldly people are those who don't think of the result). Attachment to the unreal is the cause of error. How to know it ?

When a man having renounced his attachment to the unreal, has an inclination for God, his error is rectified and memory is gained. This proves that attachment to the unreal is the real cause of error. This error is not natural, it is man-made. As he has created it, so it is his responsibility to rectify it. The Lord has given him power to rectify this mistake. As soon as this mistake is rectified, the memory (knowledge); of the self is automatically gained and then nothing remains to be done, to be known and to be achieved.

Till now a man has taken birth many times and he has had his union and again disunion with things, persons, states, circumstances and incidents etc., many times but he himself has remained the same. Union is surely to be turned into disunion while disunion is not surely to be turned into union. In fact there is only disunion, there is no union. This process of disunion has been going on since time immemorial. What seems union is continuously turning into disunion. The realization of total disunion from the world is Yoga — 'This disconnection from union with pain is called Yoga' (Gītā 6/23) (Yoga = union with the self or with God). This union is self-evident and eternal.* But this union is not realized because we assume our union with the world and the body. As soon as this assumed union is renounced, the real union is realized. Assumption of union with the world is forgetfulness (ignorance) and realization of the fact that a man can never have union with the world is memory (knowledge).

Link:–In the twentieth verse of the first chapter the gospel of the Gītā in the form of the dialogue between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna began with the term 'Atha' (now). Now in the next verse by using the term 'Iti' (thus) Sañjaya concluding the message reveals to his master the glory of this dialogue.

सञ्जय उवाच

इत्यहं वासुदेवस्य पार्थस्य च महात्मनः ।
संवादमिममश्रौषमद्भुतं रोमहर्षणम् ॥ ७४ ॥

sañjaya uvāca

ityahaṁ vāsudevasya pārthasya ca mahātmanaḥ
saṁvādamimamaśrauṣamadbhutaṁ romaharṣaṇam

Sañjaya said:

Thus have I heard this wonderful dialogue between Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa) (and) the high souled Pārtha (Arjuna) causing my hair to stand on end. 74

Comment:

'Ityahaṁ vāsudevasya pārthasya ca mahātmanaḥ'—Sañjaya says that he heard the dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna which is wonderful, singular and thrilling.

Here the term 'Iti' (Thus) denotes the conclusion of the dialogue which was started by the term 'Atha' (Now) in the twentieth verse of the first chapter.

Arjuna is addressed as high souled because Lord Kṛṣṇa carries out his order. When he orders Lord Kṛṣṇa to place his chariot between the two armies, He places it there (1/21,1/24). Moreover He answers all the questions put by Arjuna in detail in a loving manner. Thus Sañjaya heard the dialogue between the high souled Arjuna and Lord Kṛṣṇa.

* In the Disciplines of Action and Knowledge there is eternal union with the self while in the Discipline of Devotion there is eternal union with God.

'Saṁvādamimamaśrauṣamadbhutaṁ romaharṣaṇam'— What is wonderful and thrilling in the dialogue ? It is generally mentioned in the scriptures that a man can follow the spiritual path and attain salvation by renouncing the world. People in common have the same belief that a person, having renounced the world and by becoming a recluse, can attain salvation. But according to the gospel of the Gītā a man can attain salvation by making proper use of the circumstances he is placed in. The circumstances may either be the sweetest and the most favourable or the bitterest and the most unfavourable like slaughter in the war, they can lead to salvation*. The reason is that attachment to the world is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs (Gītā 13/21). Proper use of circumstances is the cause to root out that attachment i.e., he who performs his duty being free from attachment and aversion is easily set free from bondage (Gītā 5/3). This is something wonderful in this dialogue.

The Lord having incarnated disclosed his identity and asked Arjuna to take refuge in Him. This disclosure of His supreme secret causes his hair to stand on end and thrills him with bliss.

Link:–A striver feels grateful to the person by whom he is guided in the spiritual sphere. Therefore in the next three verses Sañjaya feels obliged to Vedavyāsa.

व्यासप्रसादाच्छ्रुतवानेतद्गुह्यमहं परम् ।
योगं योगेश्वरात्कृष्णात्साक्षात्कथयतः स्वयम् ॥ ७५ ॥

vyāsaprasādācchrutavānetadguhyamahaṁ param
yogaṁ yogeśvarātkṛṣṇātsākṣātkathayataḥ svayam

By the grace of Vyāsa, I heard this supreme and most secret Yoga direct from Kṛṣṇa Himself the Lord of Yoga, declaring it. 75

Comment:

'Vyāsaprasādātśrutavān'—Sañjaya was very much delighted after hearing the dialogue between Lord Kṛṣṇa and great souled Arjuna. This supreme secret was heard by him by Vyāsa's grace. The Lord Himself addressing Arjuna declares that He will speak to him His supreme word from a desire to do him good (10/1); He asks him to listen again to His supreme word, the most secret of all as he is very dear to Him (18/64); He truly promises that he will come to Him for he is dear to Him (18/65); He asks him not to grieve as He will release him from all sins (18/66). Sañjaya could get this golden opportunity of listening to the Lord's such secret gospel only by Vyāsa's grace.

'Etadguhyam paraṁ yogam' —This gospel of the Gītā is the supreme and the most secret Yoga because it has been imparted by the great Lord of all Yogas. The eternal affinity of the embodied soul with the Lord is Yoga. In order to realize that union, a striver has to practise the Disciplines of Action and Knowledge etc. This set of Yogas (Disciplines) described in the Gītā has been called the scripture of the Yoga (Yogaśāstra).

'Yogeśvarātkṛṣṇātsākṣātkathayataḥ svayam' —Sañjaya's joy knew no bound. Therefore overwhelemed

* A man can attain salvation under all circumstances through non-attachment. In fact it is non-attachment to the world which leads to salvation. This non-attachment can be developed by any means as that of the Discipline of Action or Knowledge or Devotion. But it is the attachment which is the stumbling block to salvation. When attachment is renounced, aversion also disappears. When a man becomes free from attachment and aversion, he attains salvation, because liberation from them is called salvation.

In fact a man is emancipated but he has assumed (accepted) that he is bound. As soon as he abandons this assumption, he becomes free.

with delight Sañjaya declares that he has heard this Yoga (Gospel) direct from Lord Kṛṣṇa, Himself declaring it. What was the need to Sañjaya to use the five words 'Yogeśvarāt, Kṛṣṇāt, Sākṣāt, Kathayataḥ and Svayam' here ? Sañjaya by using these five words wants to say that he has not heard this dialogue by way of tradition or through any other person but he has heard it direct from the holy lips of the Lord Himself.

राजन्संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य संवादमिममद्भुतम् ।
केशवार्जुनयोः पुण्यं हृष्यामि च मुहुर्मुहुः ॥ ७६ ॥

rājansaṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya saṁvādamimamadbhutam
keśavārjunayoḥ puṇyaṁ hṛṣyāmi ca muhurmuhuḥ

O King, as I recall again and again this dialogue, wonderous and holy; of Keśava (Kṛṣṇa) and Arjuna, I thrill with joy again and again. 76

Comment:

'Rājansaṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya saṁvādamimamadbhutam keśavārjunayoḥ puṇyaṁ hṛṣyāmi ca muhurmuhuḥ' —Sañjaya says to Dhṛtarāṣṭra that the dialogue between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna is so wonderful and thrilling that it can lead a man to salvation even when engaged in the horrible activity of killing people in a war. Remembering this dialogue Sañjaya rejoices again and again by thinking that a man can attain salvation under all circumstances.

This dialogue is a unique one. Though Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna lived together for a long time, yet there was never such a wonderful and thrilling conversation between them. When Arjuna was puzzled with regard to his duty on the one hand he did not want to fight due to his attachment to the family and on the other hand as a member of the warrior class it was his first and foremost duty to fight. When a person does not adhere to a belief, he becomes restless finding himself in a dilemma.* Arjuna was in a dilemma.

It was his restlessness which enabled him to be attracted towards the Lord. It was because of his inclination, exclusive devotion and curiosity that the Lord having forgotten His supremacy was so much engrossed in love for Arjuna that He disclosed the most profound and the supremely secret gospel of the Gītā to him. No one can describe the merit of this dialogue.

तच्च संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य रूपमत्यद्भुतं हरेः ।
विस्मयो मे महान् राजन् हृष्यामि च पुनः पुनः ॥ ७७ ॥

taccha saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya rūpamatyadbhutaṁ hareḥ
vismayo me mahān rājan hṛṣyāmi ca punaḥ punaḥ

And remembering again and again that most wonderful cosmic form of Hari, (Kṛṣṇa) great is my astonishment, O King, and I thrill with joy again and again. 77

Comment:

'Tacca saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya rūpamatyadbhutaṁ hareḥ vismayo me mahān rājan hṛṣyāmi ca punaḥ punaḥ' —In the preceding verse Sañjaya declared the dialogue between Lord Kṛṣṇa

* These days people don't seem to be curious and restless to know the reality about God and the world because they are satisfied with the transitory mundane pleasures, prosperity, praise and honour etc. They are so much engrossed in them that their restlessness to know the reality is suppressed.

and Arjuna to be wonderful while here he declares His cosmic form to be the most wonderful. Why? The reason is that the dialogue can be studied even now but His cosmic form can't be beheld now.

In the ninth verse of the eleventh chapter Sañjaya called Lord Kṛṣṇa the great Lord of Yoga while here he declares that remembering again and again that most wonderful form of Hari (Kṛṣṇa), great is his astonishment. It is natural to be astonished beholding the cosmic form of the Lord of Yoga. Secondly Lord Kṛṣṇa revealed to Arjuna His cosmic form out of compassion while Sañjaya was able to behold that cosmic form by great sage Vyāsa's grace.

Though the Lord revealed His cosmic form to mother Kausalyā when He incarnated as Rāma, to mother Yaśodā and also Duryhodhana etc., in the assembly of the Kauravas when He incarnated as Lord Kṛṣṇa, yet that cosmic form was not so terrifying and wonderful as was seen by Sañjaya, because in the latter form principal warriors were rushing head long into the Lord's fearful mouths set with terrible tusks and some were seen stuck up between His teeth with their heads crushed to powder. In the latter form it was seen that both the armies were being slaughtered. Remembering such a wonderful form of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Sañjaya was thrilled with joy again and again and he declared that it was only by great sage Vyāsa's grace that he could behold His cosmic form.

Link:–At the beginning of the Gītā Dhṛtarāṣṭra indirectly wanted to ask the consequences of the war i.e., he wanted to know whether his sons or those of Pāṇḍu would win. Sañjaya answers the question in the next verse.

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥ ७८ ॥

yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ
tatra śrīrvijayo bhūtirdhruvā nītirmatirmama

Wherever there is Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Yoga, and wherever there is Arjuna, the wielder of the bow; there are prosperity, victory, glory and righteousness (firm policy); such is my conviction. 78

Comment:

'Yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ'— Sañjaya says to Dhṛtarāṣṭra addressing him as the king that where there is Lord Kṛṣṇa the protector, the adviser of Arjuna, the Lord of all Yogas possessing great power, prosperity, learning and wisdom; and where there is Lord Kṛṣṇa's obedient and loving friend, Arjuna, the archer, there are prosperity, victory, glory and righteousness – such is his conviction.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa bestowed upon Arjuna the divine vision, Sañjaya addressed Him as 'Mahāyogeśvaraḥ' (the great Lord of Yoga). Now reminding Dhṛtarāṣṭra of the same great Lord of Yoga, he uses the term 'Yogeśvaraḥ' (the Lord of Yoga). The Lord is the inspirer who inspires archer Arjuna who is obedient to Him.

The Lord has been called the Lord or the great Lord of Yoga because He is the master of all Yogīs. He naturally possesses all virtues such as omniscience, prosperity, beauty and gracefulness naturally in a boundless quantity. These virtues are eternal and axomatice. All virtues culminate in Him.

When the war was declared, Bhīṣma was the first to blow his conch to declare the war on behalf of Kaurava-army. It was proper on his part to do so because he was the chief commander. But on behalf of Pāṇḍava-army it was Lord Kṛṣṇa, the chariot-driver Who declared the war by blowing the conch. From the worldly point of view the Lord was only a charioteer. So what right

had He to declare the war by blowing the conch ? But he did it and no body resented it. It means that He was the chief of the Pāṇḍava-army while Arjuna stood next to Him. So here Sañjaya mentions their names in order to show their predominance.

Throughout the gospel of the Gītā the Lord addressed Arjuna as 'Pārtha' thirty-eight times more than any other name. Similarly Arjuna has addressed the Lord as Kṛṣṇa nine times, more than any other address. Thus the term 'Pārtha' is more loving to Lord Kṛṣṇa while the term 'Kṛṣṇa' is more loving to Arjuna. Therefore while concluding the Gītā Sañjaya also uses these two terms.

'Tatra śrīrvijayo bhūtirdhruvā nītirmatirmama'— Wealth, splendour and prosperity are included in the term 'Śrī'. Where there is Lord Kṛṣṇa, the husband to the goddess of wealth, there wealth is naturally found.

The term 'Vijaya' denotes Arjuna as well as bravery and valour etc. Where there is valorous Arjuna, there such characteristics as heroism and vigour etc., naturally prevail because they are the characteristics of the members of the warrior class.

Similarly where there is Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Yoga there are glory, nobility influence, competence and such other virtues; and where there is righteous Arjuna, there are morality, righteousness and firm policy etc. The fact is that all the virtues such as prosperity, victory, glory and righteousness etc., are always present in Lord Kṛṣṇa as well as in Arjuna. This division has been done according to the predominance of the virtues of the two. Otherwise all the divine traits such as prosperity, gracefulness, modesty, generosity and beauty etc., are naturally found in boundless quantity in both of them.

Sañjaya answers the question of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, which he asked indirectly by declaring that the victory of Pāṇḍu's sons is certain without any doubt.

ज्ञानयज्ञः सुसम्पन्नः प्रीतये पार्थसारथेः ।
अङ्गीकरोतु तत्सर्वं मुकुन्दो भक्तवत्सलः ॥
नेत्रवेदखयुग्मे हि बहुधान्ये च वत्सरे ।
संजीवनी मुमुक्षूणां माधवे पूर्णतामियात् ॥

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुन-संवादे मोक्षसंन्यासयोगो नामाष्टादशोऽध्यायः ॥ १८ ॥

oṁ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde mokṣasaṁnyāsayogo nāmāṣṭādaśo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus with the utterance of Oṁ, Tat, Sat, the names of the Lord, in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavadgītā the knowledge of Brahma, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, this is the eighteenth chapter (discourse) designated.

'The Yoga of Liberation by Renunciation'.

This discourse has been designated as 'Mokṣasaṁnyāsayoga' because in this discourse there is predominance of the description of devotion in which even liberation or salvation is renounced.

Words, letters and Uvāca (said) in the Eighteenth Chapter

(1) In the chapter in **'Athāṣṭādaśo'dhyāyaḥ'**

there are three words, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are eight words, in verses there are nine hundred and eighty-nine words and there are thirteen concluding words. Thus the total number of the words is one thousand and thirteen.

(2) In this chapter in **'Athāṣṭādaśo'dhyāyaḥ'** there are seven letters, in **'Arjuna Uvāca'** etc., there are twenty-five letters, in verses there are two thousand, four hundred and ninety-six letters and there are forty-eight concluding letters. Thus the total number of the letters is two thousand, five hundred and seventy-six. Each of the verses in this chapter consists of thirty-two letters.

(3) In this chapter the term **'Uvāca'** (said) has been used four times — **'Arjuna Uvāca'** twice, **Śrībhagavānuvāca'** once and **'Sañjaya Uvāca'** once.

Metres Used in the Eighteenth Chapter

Out of the seventy-eight verses of this chapter, in the first quarters of the twelfth, forty-sixth and fifty-second verses 'ma-gaṇa' being used there is **'ma-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarters of the twenty-third, thirty-second thirty-seventh, forty-first, forty-fifth, fifty-sixth and seventieth verses 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'na-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarters of the thirty-third, thirty-sixth, forty-seventh and seventy-fifth verses 'bha-gaṇa' being used there is **'bha-vipulā'** metre; in the third quarter of the thirteenth verse 'ma-gaṇa' being used there is **'ma-vipulā'** metre; in the third quarter of the twenty-sixth verse 'ra-gaṇa' being used there is **'ra-vipulā'** metre; in the third quarters of the thirty-eighth and sixty-fourth verses 'na-gaṇa' being used there is **'na-vipulā'** metre; in the first quarter of the forty-ninth verse 'ma-gaṇa' being used there is **'ma-vipulā'** metre while in the third quarter 'bha-gaṇa' being used there is **'bha-vipulā'** metre. The remaining fifty-nine verses are possessed of the characteristics of right **'pathyāvaktra'** Anuṣṭup metre.

Śrī Hariḥ

Terminology (Glossary)—according to Hindi alphabet

		Chapter–Verse
adhidaiva	Brahmā, the creator	8-1
adhibhūta	perishable world	8-1,4
adhiyajña	Lord Viṣṇu	8-2,4
ananya (cetāḥ)	exclusive (mind)	9-22
aparā (Prakṛti)	lower (Nature)	7-5
avyakta	unmanifest	2-25 8-18,20,21,12-5
avyabhicāriṇī	unswerving	13-10,18-33,14-26
aśraddadhānaḥ	faithless	4-40
asaktaṁ	unattached	9-9,13-14
asat	unreal	9-19,11-37,13-12, 17-28
asaṁmuḍhaḥ	undeluded	5-20,10-3,15-19
asvargyam	excluding-heaven	2-2
ahaṅkāra	egoism	3-27,16-18, 18-53,59
ātmā	Self (soul)	6-5,6,7-18,9-5, 10-20,13-32
ādideva	Primal Deity	11-38
ābrahmabhuvanāt	upto the world of Brahmā (the creator)	8-16
āsurī	demoniac	16-5
āstikyam	belief in God	18-42
icchā	desire	13-6
indriyasya	sense	3-34
iṣṭaḥ	beloved (worshipped)	18-64 (18-70)
īśvaraḥ	the Lord	4-6
uccaiḥśravasam	Indra's vehicle, the king of horses	10-27
ucchiṣṭam	refuse	17-10
udāsīnaḥ	unconcerned (indifferent) (neutral)	12-16,6-9
uparamate	quietude	6-20
uśanā	Śukrācārya, the learned preceptor of the demons	10-37
ṛk	One of the four Vedas, a collection of the aphorisms of sacred formulas	9-17
ṛddham	affluent (rich, prosperous)	2-8
ṛṣayaḥ	sages, holy men	5-25,10-13
ekākṣaram	One syllabled	8-13
airāvatam	Indra's elephant, born at the time when the ocean was churned	10-27
Oṁ	sacred one syllabled Aum, Brahma (the Absolute)	8-13,17-23,24
Oṁkāra	sacred one syllabled Aum, Brahma (the Absolute)	9-17

		Chapter–Verse
karmaṇaḥ	action	3-1,9,4-17,14-16, 18-7,12
karmaphale	fruit of action	4-14
karmabandhanaḥ	bound by action	3-9
karmayogam	Discipline (path) of Action	3-7
karmasaṅgena	attachment to action	14-7
karmasaṅgrahaḥ	constituents (basis)	18-18
kāma-krodha	desire (lust)-anger	16-12
kārya-karaṇa-kartṛtve	effect, instrument and agent	13-20
Kuntī bhojaḥ	Kuntī's brother	1-5
Kuntī putraḥ	Kuntī's sons (Arjuna, Bhīma & Yudhiṣṭhira)	1-16
kurukṣetre	land of the Kurus (Kuru family)	1-1
kṣatriyāḥ	a warrior (a member of the warrior class)	2-32
kṣaram	perishable	15-18
kṣetra	field (body) (Nature)	13-1
kṣetrajña (Kṣetrī)	knower of the field (Soul) (Spirit)	13-1
gatiṁ	end	6-37
gatiḥ	path (nature)	4-17
gatī	path	8-26
gandharva	Gandharvas are celestial singers & musicians	11-22
gāṇḍīvaṁ	Arjuna's bow	1-30
gāyatrī	most important of all the metres contained in the Vedas (The Vedas have emanated from it)	10-35
guṇa	modes (attributes) of Prakṛti (Nature)	3-28,29
guṇasaṅgaḥ	attachment to the modes	13-21
guṇātītaḥ	rise above (transcend) the modes of nature	14-25
guruḥ	teacher (preceptor)	11-43
gṛhastha	householder	
cāturvarṇyaṁ	fourfold caste (order)	4-13
citraratha	the most prominent celestial singer	10-26
cekitānaḥ	A Yādava (a member of the Yādava family who fought on the side of the Pāṇḍavas)	1-5
chandasāmaham	of the metres (Vedic verses)	10-35
jātidharmāḥ	caste religious rites (traditions)	1-43
jitasaṅgadoṣā	victorious over the evil of attachment	15-5
jitātmā	subdued the self (body etc.)	18-49
jitendriyaḥ	subdued the senses	5-7
jīvabhūtaḥ	having become a soul	15-7
jīvaloke	in the world of life	15-7
jñāna	knowledge (through the study of scriptures)	6-8
jñānacakṣuṣaḥ	eye of wisdom (knowledge)	15-10,13-34
jñānatapasā	penance of wisdom (knowledge)	4-10
jñānadīpena	lamp of wisdom (knowledge)	10-11
jñānayajñena	knowledge sacrifice (wisdom-sacrifice)	9-15

		Chapter–Verse
jñānayogena	path (Discipline) of Knowledge	3-3
jñānī	man of wisdom (wise)	7-16,17,18
jyotiṣāṁ	among lights (luminaries)	10-21
tattvadarśinaḥ	the wise (seers of truth)	4-34
tattvavittu	knower of truth	3-28
tattvam	true nature (truth or essence)	18-1
tapasā (tapaḥ)	penance (austerity)	(7-9)
tapasviṣu	ascetics	7-9
tamasaḥ	darkness of ignorance	8-9
tamasā	darkness	18-32
daivī	divine	7-14,16-5
daivīm	divine	9-13,16-3,5
dravyayajñāḥ	wealth-sacrifice	4-28
drupadaputreṇa	Dhṛṣṭadyumna, the son of Drupada	1-3
droṇam	name of the teacher of the Pāṇḍavas	2-4,11-34
dvandvaḥ	dual	10-33
dvandvātīto	free from the pairs of opposites	4-22
dvijottama	best of the twice-born	1-7
dhanurdharaḥ	wielder of the bow	18-78
dharmakṣetre	holy field (field of righteousness)	1-1
dharme	pious traditions (pious conduct)	1-40
dharmam	duty	2-33
dharmyāmṛtam	immortal wisdom (low or doctrine)	12-20
dhātā	supporter	9-17
dhārtarāṣṭrasya	(Duryodhana) the son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra	1-33
dhyānaṁ	meditation	12-12
namaskuru (namaḥ)	bow down, prostrate	9-34,18-65
narake	hell	1-44,16-16
(narakasya)	hell	16-21
navadvāre	nine gates (two ears, two eyes, two nostrils, mouth, genital organ, anus)	5-13
naṣṭātmānaḥ	ruined soul	16-9
nāmayajñaiḥ	sacrifice in name	16-17
nityayuktasya	always absorbed (even steadfast)	8-14
nityasaṁnyāsī	perpetual renouncer (ascetic)	5-3
nidrālasya pramādottham	sleep, indolence, heedlessness	18-39
nidhānaṁ	store house	9-18
nibaddhaḥ	bound	18-60
nimittamātraṁ	merely an instrument	11-33
niyatamānasaḥ	subdued (controlled) mind	6-15
niyatātmabhiḥ	person of steadfast mind	8-2
tāmasaḥ (tāmasī)	mode (nature) of ignorance	8-9,13-17,14-16,17, (17-2,18-32,35)
tejaḥ	glory (splendour)	7-10,10-36,15-12
tejaḥ	vigour	16-3,18-43
tyaktasarvaparigrahaḥ	giving up all possessions	4-21
tyāgaḥ	renunciation (relinquishment)	16-2,18-4,9
tyāgī	relinquisher	18-11
traiguṇya	three modes (attributes)	2-45

		Chapter–Verse
traividyā	knowers of the three Vedas	9-20
dakṣiṇāyanam	six months of the southern passage path of the Sun	8-25
dambho	hypocrisy (ostentation)	16-4
dayā	compassion	16-2
darpaḥ	arrogance	16-4
dānaṁ (dāna)	charity (gift)	10-5,16-1,17-7, 20-22,25,18-5,43
divyāḥ	divine	10-16,19
dīrghasūtrī	procrastinating	18-28
durbuddheḥ	evil minded	1-23
durmatiḥ	man of perverse mind	18-16
duḥkhayonayaḥ	sources of pain	5-22
duḥkhālayam	abode of pain	8-15
dṛḍhaniścayaḥ	unshakable in determination	12-14
dṛḍhavratāḥ	firm resolve	7-28
devadeva	God of gods	10-15
devayajāḥ	worshippers of gods	7-23
devarṣiḥ	celestial sage	10-13
dehabhṛtā	embodied being	18-11
dehavadbhiḥ	by the embodied	12-5
dehī	the embodied	2-22,30,5-13,14-20
daityānām	among demons	10-30
daivaḥ	the divine	16-6
niṣṭhā	path	3-3
nistraiguṇyo	free from the three attributes (modes)	2-45
niḥśreyasakarau	lead to salvation	5-2
niḥspṛhaḥ	free from thirst for enjoyment	2-71
nīti	righteousness (firm or wise policy)	10-38,18-78
naiṣkarmyasiddhiṁ	the Supreme State consisting in freedom from action	18-49
naiṣkarmyaṁ	actionlessness	3-4
naiṣkṛtikaḥ	malicious	18-28
naiṣṭhikīm	everlasting (final)	5-12
nyāyyaṁ	right	18-15
nyāsaṁ	renunciation	18-2
paṇavānakagomukhāḥ	tabors, drums, cowhorns	1-13
paradharmaḥ	duty of another	3-35
paramātmā	the Supreme spirit (God)	6-7,13-22,31,15-17
parameśvara	Lord Supreme (Supreme Lord)	13-27
pitaraḥ	manes	1-34,42
purāṇaḥ	ancient (primeval)	2-20,11-38
puruṣaḥ	self (soul)	15-17
prakṛtiḥ (mūla)	Nature (Primordial Matter)	7-4,9-10,13-20, 18-59
prajāpatiḥ	the creator (Brahmā)	3-10
praṇipātena	prostration (humble reverence)	4-34
prapadye	refuge	15-4
Prabhuḥ	Lord	5-14,9-18,24

		Chapter–Verse
pramādaḥ	heedlessness (negligence)	14-13
prayāṇakāle	at the hour of death	7-30,8-2,10
pralaya	dissolution, annihilation	7-6,9-18,14-14,15
pravṛttiḥ	activity	14-12,15-4,18-46
prasaktāḥ	addicted	16-16
prasāda	placidity (Serenity or purity) of mind	2-64,65
prāṇāpāna	ingoing and outgoing life-breaths	4-29,15-14
prāṇāyāma	breath restraint	
pretān	gnomes	17-4
phala (hetavaḥ)	(seekers after) fruit (reward)	2-49
badhyate	bound	4-14
bahudaṁṣṭrākarālaṁ	many terrible tusks	11-23
buddhiḥ	mind, intellect (intelligence)	2-39,41,44,52,53, 65,66
brahma	the Absolute (God)	4-24
brahmacaryam	celibacy	8-11,17-14
brahmanirvāṇam	beatitude of God (Brahmic bliss)	2-72,5-24,25,26
brahmabhūtaḥ	identified with Brahma (the Absolute)	5-24,18-54
brahmabhūyāya	for becoming Brahma (the Absolute)	14-26,18-53
brāhmaṇakṣatriyaviśāṁ	the three Varṇas (castes) known as Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya	18-41
brāhmī	Brahmic state (eternal state of beautitude of God)	2-72
bhaktaḥ	devotee	4-3,7-21,9-31
bhaktiḥ	devotion	13-10
bhagavan	the blessed Lord (Lord)	10-14,17
bhajatāṁ	worshipping	10-10
bhāvaiḥ	nature	7-13
bhūtānām	beings	4-6,10-5,20,22, 11-2,13-15,18-46
bhoktā	enjoyer, experiencer	9-24,13-22
bhogaiśvarya-prasaktānāṁ	attached to pleasures and prosperity (man (embodied soul) is a fragment of God)	2-44
manaḥ (manasā)	mind	1-30,2-60,(3-6,7, 5-11,13)
madhyastha	mediator	6-9
manaḥ prasādaḥ	cheerfulness of mind	17-16
manīṣiṇām	the wise (philosophers)	18-5, 3, 2-51
mantraḥ	hymns	9-16, 17-13
maharṣayaḥ	sages	10-2,6
mahātmā	great soul	7-19,11-50
mahābhūtāni	the five great (subtle) elements	13-5
mātrāsparśaḥ	contact of senses with their objects	2-14
māyā	divine illusion	7-14
mārgaśīrṣaḥ	a month of the Hindu calender	10-35
muktam (muktaḥ)	liberated	18-40,5-28,12-15, 18-71
muniḥ	sage	2-56, 5-6,28,10-26

		Chapter–Verse
mumukṣubhiḥ	seekers of liberation	4-15
mūḍhaḥ (mūḍhāḥ)	deluded (ignorant)	7-25,7-15,9-11, 16-20
mṛtyusaṁsārasāgarāt	ocean of death bound existence	12-7
mokṣam	liberation (salvation)	18-30
mohaḥ	delusion	11-1,14-13,18-73
maunī	(silent) he who thinks of God only	12-19
yakṣarakṣasām	genies and demons	10-23,17-4
yajur	one of the four Vedas	9-17
yajñadānatapaḥ	sacrifice, gift, penance	18-3,17-25
yatacittasya	disciplined (controlled) mind	6-19
yatacetasām	those who have subdued (controlled) their minds	5-26
yatavākkāyamānasaḥ	speech, body, mind subdued (controlled)	18-52
yatātmavān (yatātmā)	self-controlled	12-11,14
yantrārūḍhāni	mounted on a machine	18-61
yamaḥ	god of death	10-29,11-39
yuktacetasaḥ	steadfast mind	7-30
yuktatamaḥ	most devout	6-47
yuktatamāḥ	most perfect (best versed) in Yoga	12-2
yuktaḥ	a Karmayogī (a Sāṅkhyayogī)	5-12,(5-8)
yuktātmā	steadfast in mind	7-18
yogakṣemaṁ	gain and security	9-22
yogabhraṣṭaḥ	He who has fallen (deviated from Yoga)	6-41
yogaḥ	equanimity (evenmindedness)	2-48
vijñāna	Wisdom (Self-Realization)	6-8
vyaktayaḥ	manifest	8-18
vyavasāyātmikā	determinate (resolute) (one pointed)	2-41,44
vyāsaprasādāt	by the grace of Vyāsa	18-75
vaiśya	trading class	18-44
vānaprastha	retired order	
śaṅkhaṁ	conch	1-12,13,14
śabda brahma	rule laid down in the Vedas	6-44
śaraṇam	refuge	2-49,9-18,18-62,66
śarīravāṅmanobhiḥ	body, speech, mind	18-15
śarīrastham	dwelling (seated) in the body	17-6
śāntiḥ (śāntim)	peace (tranquillity)	(2-70,71 etc.) 2-66, 12-12,16-2
śāstravidhānoktam	said in the ordinance of the scriptures	16-24
śāstravidhi	ordinance of the scriptures	16-23
śuklakṛṣṇe	the bright and the dark	8-26
śūdrasya	one of the four Varṇas (caste) (service class)	18-44
śraddhā	faith	17-2,3
śradhāvān	man of faith	4-39
śreyaḥ	good (better)	1-31,2-5,7,3-2 etc.
ṣaṇmāsā (śuklaḥ)	six months of the northern path of the sun	8-24
ṣaṇmāsā (kṛṣṇaḥ)	six months of the southern path of	

		Chapter–Verse
	the sun	8-25
saṅgaḥ	attachment	2-47,62
sataḥ	real	2-16
samatā (samattvam)	equanimity (even-mindedness)	10-5,2-48
samabuddhayaḥ (samabuddhiḥ)	alike, even-minded	12-4,6-9
sarvagataḥ	all-pervading	2-24
sarvaguhyatamaṁ	most secret	18-64
sarvadehinām	all embodied beings	14-8
sarvadharmān	all duties	18-66
sarvabhutahite	doing good (welfare) of all beings	5-25,12-4
sarvalokamaheśvaram	Great Lord of all the worlds	5-29
sarvasaṅkalpasaṁnyāsī	renounced all thoughts of the world	6-4
sarvārambhaparityāgī	renounced all initiative (inaction)	12-16,14-25
savijñānam	with real knowledge of manifest Divinity-i.e. in the world there is nothing else besides the manifestation of God	7-2
savyasācin	Arjuna who could shoot arrows with his left hand also	11-33
sahajam (karma)	innate (duty)	18-48
saṅkarasya	confusion of castes	3-24
saṁnyāsa (saṁnyāsī)	renounced order (renouncer)	
saṁnyāsaḥ	renunciation	5-2,6
saṁnyāsī	renouncer	6-1
sampadaṁ	nature	16-3,4,5
sādhaka	striver (aspirant)	
sādhanā	spiritual practice or spiritual discipline	
sammohaṁ	delusion	7-27
saṁśuddhakilbiṣaḥ	purified from sins	6-45
saṁsiddhim	highest perfection (God-Realization)	3-20,8-15,18-45
saṁsparśajā	born of contact (with objects)	5-22
sāttvika	nature (mode) of goodness	17-11,18-9, 26 etc.
sādhuḥ (sādhūnām)	Saint (good)	9-30,(4-8)
sāṅkhyayogam (saṁnyāsa)	the Discipline (path) of Knowledge	5-4
sāma	One of the four Vedas	9-17
siddhānām	Those who have attained perfection	7-3,10-26
siddhiḥ (asiddhiḥ)	success (failure)	4-12,(2-48,18-26)
sukṛtaduṣkṛte	good (virtue) and evil (vice)	2-50
sukhaduḥkhe	pleasure and pain	2-38
sudurācāraḥ	vilest sinner	9-30
suvirūḍhamūlam	firm rooted	15-3
suhṛdam	disinterested friend (well-wisher)	5-29 (1-27)
suhṛnmitrāryudāsīna-madhyasthasdveṣya	well-wishers, friends neutrals, mediators, hateful	6-9
sūkṣmatvāt	because of its subtlety	13-15
sūtaputraḥ	Karṇa (Karṇa was brought up by a charioteer)	11-26

		Chapter–Verse
saumadattiḥ	Bhūriśravā, the son of Somadatta	1-8
sthitaprajñasya	a man of steadfast (stable) wisdom	2-54,55
sthitadhīḥ	firm in wisdom	2-54,56
spṛhā	craving	4-14,14-12
smṛtivibhramaḥ (smṛtibhraṁśād)	loss of memory	2-63
svargaṁ	heaven	2-37
svādhyāyajñāna-yajñāḥ	study of the scriptures and knowledge as sacrifice	4-28
harṣaśokānvitaḥ	moved by joy and sorrow	18-27
hitakāmyayā	wishing welfare	10-1
hṛddeśe	in the hearts	18-61

॥ Shri Hari ॥

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In this commentary the
interpretation of very many
Ślokas runs contrary to other
commentaries. But its
intention is not in the least
to show that other
commentaries are wrong,
instead I have interpreted
them as it seemed non-
controversially apt,
corresponding to the context,
rationally viable, satisfying
and dear to me. There has
never been my idea of
anyone's refutation or
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